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ARABIAN DAYS AND NIGHTS.

LONDON: PRINTED BY W. CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHARING CROSS.

ARABIAN DAYS AND NIGHTS;

OR,

Rays from the East.

BY

MARGUERITE A. POWER.



"At the first opening of the gorgeous East."

SHAKESPEARE.

LONDON:

SAMPSON LOW, SON, AND CO., 47 LUDGATE HILL.

1863.

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TO
JANET AND HENRY ROSS.

To you, my dear friends, whose cordial and affectionate hospitality afforded me the opportunity of gathering together the materials for this little volume, I offer it with warm and grateful regard.

MARGUERITE A. POWER.



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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

IT happened, towards the close of the year 1861, that, owing to circumstances over which I had no control, my home was broken up, and I found myself suddenly gifted with the doubtfully desirable freedom of taking the wings of the morning, and going beyond the sea, or in any other direction towards which it might please me to bend my course. That master-key which, once obtained, opens so enormous a range to its possessor—*la clef des champs*—was put, unsolicited, into my hands, and as it opens all the ports of the world, it but remained for me to decide upon which I should employ it.

Destiny, however, soon stepped in to fix my choice; and can it be a matter of surprise that she should unhesitatingly lead me to the lands where she reigns paramount—where she is worshipped as a goddess, and obeyed as a despot,—



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ARABIAN DAYS AND NIGHTS.

ness, opens the door to a thousand ills yet worse and more dangerous than itself: tyranny and treachery in the governing class, represented by the Turk; abject self-abasement in the governed, typified by the Arab—these constitute evils grievous to a thinking mind to witness, and which, to my idea, contain elements of dissolution to both—that it only requires a certain and comparatively brief space of time to bring into full and final action.

Yet, oh reader! while my reason condemns so much that I saw in that golden, gorgeous, sun-blest East, glorious even amid degradation, inanition and decay—while I chafe at the Turk, utterly mistrust the Levantine, bestow a somewhat contemptuous pity on the Arab—my heart warms at the thought of the days I spent beneath those Eastern rays! my pulse throbs higher when I think of the warmth and glow and fulness and richness of life and colour they call forth and glorify.

And what would those Arabian Night-scenes in Cairo be without the imposing—in both senses of the word—dignity of those wicked, sly old Turks; the quaintness of those keen-eyed, still slyer Levantines; the graceful raggedness of the childish

Arabs, equally ready to laugh or cry—to cheat you clumsily or to bear a beating for it? What would the narrow streets be without their picturesque disorder, their motley crowds? The bazaars without their somnolent merchants, dreaming on their divans, between the chibouque and fingan; the workers in gold and silver and embroidery, in tent-hangings, and horse-housings, and in inlaid ware? The blind beggars and beggaresses, who kiss the hem of your garment; the readers of the Koran, who, rocking themselves to and fro, chant the sacred verses, but still keeping a view out of the corner of their eye on what is going on without?

And how would it be if we knew we could no longer meet—as we now feel we may do any day—the good Haroun Alraschid, and the grand vizier Giafar, and Mesrour, the chief of the Eunuchs, come on a trip from Bagdad; and Nouredin Ali, and Bedreddin Hassan, and the Christian merchant, natives of Cairo? If we could not imagine yon veiled lady, riding with the little boy on the white ass, and carefully attended, might not, perchance, be the Queen of Beauty, and her son Agib?

We all know the story of St. Augustine, who, praying to be converted, added the clause, "Lord, not yet!" Thus must we while, in the name of advancement, humanity, and civilization, desiring to see the East arise from its stupor, awakened, enlightened, and purified by European religion, instruction, and legislation, still secretly entertain the hope that the East of our day may at least last our time: and that when weary of this wise, well-ordered, well-behaved, chilly civilization of ours, we may all of us, to say nothing of our children, be able to take flight for awhile to that old Land of the Morning, the cradle of that very civilization which with us is daily attaining a fuller growth, while there it remains a senseless infant; and, relaxing the tension of our brains and bodies, bask deliciously in the full glory of those Eastern rays.

Haverhill Arms-Bowyer.

1863.

ARABIAN DAYS AND NIGHTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE VOYAGE.

The "Atlantic"—The Start—Next Morning—Breakfast—Chaos—"At Battle with the Breeze"—Getting Serious—Oriental Tars—The Storm's Work—A British Tar—The Drowned Woman—Gibraltar—A Moorish Beau—"In Blue Water"—Malta—Arrival at Alexandria.

ON the 12th November of the year 1861, I left London enveloped in one of the densest yellow fogs my experience of the dear old dirty city has ever recorded, and started for Liverpool, on the first stage of my journey to Egypt. Why I chose this route, involving a sea voyage that could hardly last less than sixteen days, and might extend to twenty, it boots it not here to record; though I may mention, just *en passant*, that it costs

about half the price of the Marseilles and Southampton passages, besides giving far better accommodation to passengers than either, and saving the trouble of shifting and looking after baggage, &c., which, to the Unprotected Female, is no small consideration, especially where, as in the present case, that "lone, lorn creatur" is in feeble health.

Sleeping at Liverpool, I embarked next day on board the "Atlantic," Captain Horsfall, whose name I record with gratitude, as having done all that captain could do to insure the comfort of his passengers in general, and of myself in particular, during the seventeen days of trial we passed on board that blessed ship.

Now be it known I had piqued myself for many years on being a particularly good sailor. In my early youth I had three times crossed the Atlantic, twice without being sick; and in later years I had traversed the Channel over and over again by every yet discovered route—that of the Channel Islands included—*almost* with impunity, only feeling qualmish after some hours of really rough weather. I come, moreover, of a roving family; some members of which make light of two or

three voyages to Australia, who think a trip to America not worth mentioning, and who fortified my courage in the present instance by pictures of the varied enjoyments of a sea voyage, and by prophesying the wonders it would work on my impaired state of health. So, ignoring the Channel and the Bay of Biscay, and acknowledging only the Mediterranean—the very name of which, as connected with Italy, which, for years it had been my dream to visit, was full of attraction to me—I embarked with a stout heart.

The "Atlantic" was a large screw steamer, an excellent sea-boat (as the result proved), with very good sleeping accommodation, except in the matter of ventilation, which, as she was built to keep out the bitter blasts of the Baltic, was inefficient; and as we had only about a dozen cabin passengers—five children included—I had a cabin with two berths and a sofa to myself. I was armed, moreover, with a special recommendation to the captain and the steward—a personage who shall later figure in this narrative—from a Liverpool merchant of much influence in Egyptian commerce, to whose active and helpful kindness I here pay grateful tribute, and who accompanied me on

board ; so my voyage bid fair to be made under auspicious circumstances.

It is my custom to make the best of matters at all times and under all conditions ; and I have found that if you go forth into the world in the spirit of Dick Swiveller's "Marchioness," making believe a great deal that orange-peel and water is nice, you may even arrive, as she did, at finding it palatable. There are so many things in this life that *will* wring and sting your heart, in despite of all philosophy, that surely it is well, and not very difficult even, to bear the trifling ills cheerfully, and interpose a rose-coloured veil between yourself and any unsightly object that, if viewed in its nakedness, would offend your eye.

So, when I entered my little cabin, where the chief steward, a fine, tall, powerful man of colour, named Richardson, was arranging my boxes in the most convenient fashion, I persuaded myself that if it would not blow *very* hard, and I could thus escape sickness, I should be very comfortable indeed, and that my sixteen or twenty days, as the case might be, would pass away like a pleasant holiday. It was dark when I got on board ; and after succeeding, by the means of cheerful resolu-

tion, in getting some tea for myself and a poor lady—who was too much weighed down by the sad and heavy responsibility of taking charge of a brother utterly crippled by rheumatism, and for whom the climate of Egypt had been ordered, to make a very cheery or active start—I got to bed. The berth might have been larger and less stuffy about the head, I thought; and had the mattress been a trifle thicker I should not have objected. However, my philosophy was certainly not to be disturbed by such considerations; and after lying for awhile, feeling the steady beat of the screw, so like that throbbing of the great vessel's great heart, that I never could divest myself of the idea that it really was so, the noises on deck, and the *whish* of the water through which we were rapidly and quietly cutting our way, I fell into a light sleep, in which the real and ideal were so blended, that it seemed as if

“All things were and were not;”

till the morning brought movement and sound that would have chased heavier slumbers.

And now, slowly, despite my resolution to ignore the Channel and the Bay of Biscay, was “borne in upon me” the distressing fact that the

former passage, at least, did exist; that it was a highly unpleasant passage when it blew; and that at this moment it was blowing, and that very fresh. No matter, said I, it will be delightful on deck—(I am pretty safe from sickness on deck)—if I can only get there, and to do so I must be up and about my toilet as soon as may be. Bring me, O steward! some hot water, and I shall be afoot anon. I tumble out of my berth; it is only the difficulty and inconvenience of doing so—I being weak and somewhat helpless—that make me feel giddy and uncomfortable—nothing else. Some breakfast—though I don't find myself hungry, or anxious for the meal—and a good blowing on deck, and I shall be all right. I dress under difficulties, decidedly, and stagger into the saloon, where a small sprinkling of passengers are scattered about the table—cheerful, for the most part, some even facetious—though they seem to me to look paler than they did last night; but that may be the effect of the skylight. Only the captain, who has a handsome, healthy, pleasant face, looks rosy and bright; but a seafaring life naturally produces these rubicund tints: I dare say I shall look something like that before the voyage is over.

The board is laden with viands of the most substantial character. My eye glances down a vista of eggs and bacon, cold beef, ham, tongue, fowls, mutton chops, and fried liver.

I am not used to such heavy breakfasts, and it is that, no doubt, which gives me this distaste to all these good dishes; for they are the best of their kind. It is also, unquestionably, because this dish of beefsteaks before the captain, and just under my nose, is so *very* large that I turn from it with rising disgust; for I like beefsteaks, in general.

The steward asks me, what will I have? Well, as I am not sick, I must have something. It won't do to starve, with this brisk sea-breeze to give me an appetite—which will come of course when I get on deck—so I had better prepare against its attacks. I think I could eat a little bit of that fried bacon that is almost too far off for me to see or smell it—"a *very* little bit, steward, and no egg, thank you." Now, with this bit of bacon and a little triangle of toast, and a cup of tea, I shall do famously till lunch-time, when, I have no doubt, I shall be as hungry as a hunter.

But why is it that I can't swallow any of these

things? that they seem loathsome to me? that as the vessel rolls, and she rolls more and more every minute, something in my chest is heaved up, and then sinks down, down, dyingly? Why is it that my head is giddy, my heart beats, and I particularly object to anybody addressing me? That I feel, on the whole, I should be much better in my cabin, though the idea of rising and getting there is attended with a feeling of extreme uneasiness, and a sense of peril and difficulty not to be described? Get there, however, I must, and that soon; I rise, my head swims; somebody—I don't know who—helps me to stagger once more across the saloon, much more unsteady than before, hands me into my cabin, and—the rest of the day is a blank.

The following extract from my journal describes the next three days:—

“15th. Heavy swell. 16th. Rolling much; got on deck. 17th. Stiff N. E. breeze. Wind kept on increasing. Got on deck. Passed portion of wreck. Shipped many seas.”

Yes, decidedly there *is* a Channel, and there *is* a Bay of Biscay, O; and I now begin to understand why that exclamatory letter is appended, and

with what suffering emphasis it should be pronounced.

But the worst was yet to come. On the 18th, the stiff nor-easter had gathered to a genuine gale. I felt that to attempt to get up were worse than useless. I had no fear, and as I lay in my berth, little sickness; but what should I do?—how should I be were I up? especially as the decks were being swept from stern to stem by the angry waves that pursued us; and already the galley had been carried away before them, and the sail we had attempted to hoist to steady her rent in two.

So I lay still, reading the poem of Tannhäuser, and holding on in my berth as well as I could, laying down the book now and then to note the progress of the storm.

I think what struck me most was the labouring, living, agony of the ship, and her gallant fight against wind and water. How she suffered! From side to side she rolled; every timber creaking and groaning with throes of pain. Now a heavy sea would strike her, and she stood still a moment, stunned and shuddering, then on again, unvanquished.

And all the time the Great Heart beat as a human heart in dire distress and terror might do : pausing for some seconds, as though paralyzed, then throbbing thick and fast, each beat shaking the ship's frame till she quivered throughout. And the waves, as they struck the side at my ear, made a sound hard as though a cart-load of stones were, with each, hurled against the planks ; and every now and then the cabin was filled with dim green light that came through the body of translucent water lifted against the portholes,—an *aqua marine* lustre, truly.

Presently came a noise, to which all previous noises had been silence, accompanied by a shock that nearly flung me from my berth, though I was already holding on might and main.

It was a roar, a hiss, a crash, men's shouts, women's screams, the rush of a cataract all mingled in one. I started up, looked and listened ; but I would not scream or call out, for I knew my fellow-passengers, if there were any of them afoot, could give me no information, and the ship's hands would, whatever might have happened, have other occupation than attending to me. In such cases, where a woman cannot act, her only

course is to be still, and, as the French say, *s'effacer*, letting the men work undisturbed. In another second under my door swept in a current of water, swirling to and fro with the roll of the ship, and bearing my unfortunate slippers like wrecked barks on its momentarily deepening tide. And then in came the pleasant, bronzed face of my dear steward, who all through these trying days had tended me with more than woman's care and skill, to reassure me.

A wave had carried away the saloon skylight, the chimney of the stove, the captain's cabin, and, in short, had made a pretty clean sweep of the decks.

The ship, however, had behaved gallantly, no material damage that could endanger our safety was done; but the captain, as a precautionary measure, had resolved to stop the screw and lie-to till the violence of the gale should have abated, as it was vain to strive any longer to outstrip the pursuing waves.

I ought to have mentioned in its place that the chief of our passengers consisted of the Turkish and Arab officers and crew of a steam yacht which the Pacha had sent to England, where she had originally been built, to be altered, and, indeed, re-

built—a process which most of his steamers undergo at least once, generally to the destruction of any good qualities they may have originally possessed.

As the transmogrification of the “Feruzé”—Turquoise,—was likely to be a work of time, her crew were ordered to return to Egypt. They were also accompanied by a number of Turkish and Arab youths of respectable families, who, under the charge of a sort of tutor, had been sent, at the Pacha’s expense, to complete their studies in Europe.

The captain had given up his cabin on deck to the chief officers of the yacht, and the school-master, as he was called, and the lads (all of whom were destined for the sea) had also been accommodated above.

Their domiciles, therefore, having been swept away, or so dilapidated as to yield no further shelter, they came down and established themselves in the saloon, till other abodes should be provided for them; and then came out the seamanlike qualities of these Oriental sons of Neptune.

The steward (with whom they carried on ha-

bitual warfare on the subject of provisions, he, single-handed, being always victorious) suggested that the boys should employ their leisure in baling the water out of the cabin. This they declined to do, preferring to remain ankle-deep in cold salt water mixed with broken glass, to making the effort necessary to remove it. A threat of rope's-ending, however, awakened their benumbed faculties; but no sooner was their task imperfectly performed than as many as could sit round the table, officers included, placed themselves there, their arms crossed on it, and their faces buried, awaiting the will of Allah, stupefied with cold, and fear, and fatalism.

And as it was the will of Allah that at every rock and throe a fresh cataract should rush down the broken skylight, they each time received the full benefit thereof, starting up with exclamations at every new drenching, then sitting down again to profit by the next.

And so the dreary day wore on, and the November sky darkened early, and—the screw being stopped—the ship drifted aimlessly out of her course; and in the midst of cold, and wet, and gloom, and tempest, I lay alone in my dark

cabin, sick, fatigued from the sheer efforts of holding myself in my berth, and faint from want of food which I could not bring myself to touch, and yet more from want of air—the state of the sea rendering the opening of the portholes a danger not for a moment to be contemplated.

I have passed happier evenings both before and since; yet amidst all I was spared the worst suffering such a situation is calculated to produce—I was not frightened. On most occasions of peril I have a strange insensibility to it, which proceeds from two causes—the first being a natural tendency to ignore danger, which I suppose I may call courage; the second a constitutional, not a morbid, indifference to life, and a feeling that death—of which I entertain no terror—*must* come once, and can come *but* once; so that whether it arrive a little sooner or a little later the question of time is one of small importance.

At last my steward—who had been as busy as another coloured gentleman in a gale of wind—came once more to report to me the state of affairs, which had undergone but little change since the last account, except that there was the additional information that the captain had hurt

his arm severely, and been violently bruised by being carried the whole length of the deck by the wave that had caused the first "horrible pothor o'er our heads," and that two seamen had on the same occasion been disabled. It afterwards proved that the captain's arm was badly broken, and one of his legs terribly cut; yet he never, for the remainder of the voyage, abandoned the active and personal discharge of his duties for one hour, never changed his mode of life except in the matter of regimen, and never uttered a complaint or expression of suffering, though at times he must have undergone pain the most acute, to say nothing of the fever, exhaustion, and nervous irritation consequent on his state and on the exertions made under such conditions.

Richardson having lit my lamp, given me his news, talked cheerily for a while, and forced me to take some beef tea he had made expressly for me, under considerable difficulties, left me in a somewhat revived condition; and I lay as still as the rolling would permit, indolently contemplating the swinging of the lamp at my bed-foot (I had adopted the sofa as my sleeping-place, and Richardson had had a side put to it to keep me in,

and had borrowed from somebody a feather-bed to put under the mattress), and marking with my eye on the pannels of the wall the extremest angles to which the motion carried it. Further on in the evening—I kept no account of time—the captain came to the door of my, and of my neighbour's, cabin—the poor lady with the sick brother—and told us in his brisk cheery voice (I knew not then the effort it must have cost him to keep it so), the present state and prospect of affairs, adding that the ship was behaving gallantly.

I overheard him say afterwards to some one in the saloon that now had been done all that human power could do to carry us through the night.

At last, despite the storm and the rolling, I, having wedged myself with my knees and back against the sides of my bed-place, fell into a troubled sleep. Towards morning I woke up suddenly with a sense of joy at the renewal of the throb of the Great Heart; for I knew that was the sign of the tempest's abatement, and of our return to our course from aimless drifting out of it. So I thanked God and slept again, how quietly!

I learned afterwards that during the earlier part

of the gale, which had been gathering from the time we had started, and had actually blown upwards of forty-eight hours, that we had passed some portions of wreck, and the body of a woman—the sex distinguished, as the captain told me, by its floating face downwards, while the body of a man always floats on the back. Curious, if true, which the experience of seamen asserts it to be.

By degrees the wind fell and the sea with it, but we had no really calm weather before passing the straits of Gibraltar.

On the night of the 21st, at midnight, we reached Gibraltar. I confess, on seeing it in the morning, I was somewhat disappointed; but the state of the weather might have been the cause of this. It was a chilly, murky day, and a sullen fog hung heavily over the summit of the rock: still it was land; and, as such, unspeakably welcome.

And presently boats came off with fruits, and vegetables, and fish, all of the brightest colours;—the fish were tinted with red and green metallic lustres—all grouped in most picturesque confusion; and you felt that the land and its productions, to which those weary days and nights of suffering and danger had brought you, were new

and strange, and that your very agony had not been for nothing.

The bay was full of vessels, more or less damaged by the late gale ; and one wreck was towed in just before us. Most of our passengers went ashore ; but I felt too ill and weak for the effort, and sat on deck with the invalid brother of my neighbour, watching the boats, and the shore, and the seagulls, hovering round with their plaintive cry. I noticed here on them an effect of light I never observed elsewhere. As the birds flew to and fro, a reflection of the water dyed their white breasts, and the under sides of their wings, of the loveliest sea-green, which appeared precisely like the natural colour. We took on board here some Moors—several men, two women, and two children—with all their goods and chattels. One of the men was a hadj or pilgrim, lately returned from Mecca ; and he wore, as a mark of that distinguishing fact, a mantle of the Prophet's green.

He was young, tall, rather good-looking, and a tremendous dandy. His turban was of vast proportions and snowy whiteness ; his vest was crimson, his slippers yellow, his moustache, which he was constantly twisting and caressing, most care-

fully trimmed, and an almost perpetual smile was on his face; but there was behind the smile, I thought, a sort of furtive expression, neither pleasing nor reassuring. Most of the other men were evidently in a lower position than our Moorish Brummell, and hideously ugly, with faces like camels, without the large soft eye. The women—wisely, as I thought, seeing what the men were like—kept themselves closely veiled, and sat huddled up on the deck amid their properties, like bales of goods with eyes to them. Presently they were all cleared away, and I saw them no more for the rest of the voyage, though the splendid hadj, and one or two others of the “upper ten thousand” class, might be seen parading the deck occasionally, or conversing with our Turks and Arabs.

In the afternoon some of our fellow-passengers came off, bringing for the invalids fruit, and what I prized far more, bunches of those lovely little silvery jonquils that hang their fair, fragile clusters over the rocks, in untrained and generally unnoticed beauty. Soon after we again got under weigh.

The next day was warm and beautiful, like a

May-day in England. And now, for the first time, I understood why the term blue is so perseveringly used with reference to the Mediterranean. On the surface it is not bluer than many other seas, perhaps less so than some I have seen, on the coast of Brittany, for example ; but the blueness is in its depths, as you look down into them from the ship's side or stern. It varies according to the state of the atmosphere, from the profoundest purple-blue—almost black—to the purest ultramarine ; and even the foam in the vessel's wake is tinged with it. All other seas I have had experience of have been green to look into, even when the sky-reflection gave them an azure surface ; but the Mediterranean is blue within, always under all skies.

On the 27th we reached Malta. The day was dazzling, and I think I never saw a gayer scene. There lay Valetta, brilliantly trim and clean, with her yellow stone buildings and bright-coloured wooden closed balconies hung on to them. Dancing to and fro about the ship were dozens of boats of quaint shape, and painted in stripes and patterns of every vivid colour—very rainbows of boats—guided by brown Maltese men and boys,

with what Lady Morgan calls "eyes put in with dirty fingers," and looking, some of them, absolutely unnatural from the intense blackness of the setting.


Besides the provision boats were some whose cargo consisted entirely of canaries, which hopped about in their little square cages, and plumed themselves and sang out with that thrilling force with which canaries alone can sing, as much at their ease among the tumult and hubbub as they could have been in some loving mistress's balcony.

The rest of the voyage was uneventful; the weather calm and generally bright, and the nights glorious. The dear steward had fitted up in the stern, under shelter of the ruins of the captain's cabin, a little retreat, with sofa-cushions and pillows for my neighbour Miss M—, and myself, and there of an evening we used to admit a select circle to tea or lemonade—such lemonade as Richardson made from green lemons obtained at Malta, I never tasted—and then we told stories till ten o'clock. I remember a great luminous green star, that used to blaze like a beacon in the wake of the vessel. I do not know the name of it: I thought if I asked, I might be told some

absurd inapplicable one, so I preferred that the lovely luminary should preserve its mystery and its strangeness, and blaze there, a beauteous, nameless wonder.

On the night of the 1st December we arrived outside the port of Alexandria; but as, on account of the bar, it is really hazardous for vessels of any size to attempt an entrance in the dark, we remained without till daylight. When I arose at seven, we were anchored in the harbour; and ere I had well finished dressing, Mr. and Mrs. R—, the friends with whom I was to spend the winter, came on board to receive me.

The latter part of the voyage had been so nearly agreeable; I had become such good friends with some of those partners of peril and wretchedness; I had met with, from those belonging to the ship, such unceasing kindness and attention—the captain and my good Richardson have a claim on my perpetual gratitude—that, glad as I was to have arrived at the end of danger and suffering, it was not altogether without a feeling of regret that I bade adieu to the “Atlantic.”



CHAPTER II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF ALEXANDRIA.

Through the Streets—The Square—Houses in Alexandria—
At Home in Egypt—A Turkish Gentleman—Lulu—Within
Doors—Fellaheen—Fellahahs—Arab Children—The Saïs
—The Fellah—The Fellah as Servant—The Arab and his
Steed—A Domestic Scene.

ON arriving in the harbour of Alexandria—and I suppose the same remark would apply to any Eastern port—the two features calculated, I think, especially to strike a European as marking the Oriental character of the place, are the domes and minarets of the mosques, and the palm trees. These are so eloquent of the land where the sun is born, that you feel at once you have left Europe and the West behind you ; and this introduction once made, all that you subsequently see appears, however rich and interesting, as a natural and necessary part of the great spectacle, and hardly takes you by surprise.

This, at least, was the sensation I experienced

while at Alexandria, where the European element is so much infiltrated into the Eastern that all contrasts are softened down, and the two characters blended together.

It was not till some months later, when I got to Cairo—Cairo, unchanged since Scheherezade made it the scene of some of those perennial legends that, as we walk through the streets and bazaars, seem as stories of to-day—that the vast, vague, dreamy immutable spirit of Orientalism took my mind in its intensely fascinating grasp, keeping me perpetually, during my stay there, filled with such a sense of it that at times, from its force and the inability I felt to express, or even make quite clear to myself its nature and extent, it became oppressive.

As soon as we reached the quay, our boat was beset with innumerable Arabs—brown, fine of limb, bare-legged, bare-armed, bare-breasted; but in no instance bare-headed—the tarboosh or red skull-cap, with its pendant blue tassel, being a necessary portion of the Mahometan's clothing, indoors and out.

Nearly all my baggage having been despatched to the Custom-house, under the charge of one of

Mr. R—'s people, who was to pass it for me, there was little in the boat, besides ourselves, to carry ; yet this fact seemed in no way to abate the intense desire of these impromptu porters to be of service to us. They seized the boat's prow, they struggled, they jabbered, they pushed, they hustled each other, till the boatman drove them away with cuffs and threats, which they made not the slightest attempt to resist or resent.

Landing and making our way through the crowd, we got into Mrs. R—'s carriage, and commenced our course among the older and more Oriental parts of the city, including the bazaars.

Very curious was the sensation. Seated in a European carriage, behind a pair of European horses, we dashed along through narrow, unpaved, wofully ill-kept streets, between irregular rows of Turkish houses—the lower floors all open to the street, and generally used as shops, the upper capriciously sprinkled with tiny windows, jealously protected by a close trellis-work of wood, and arranged in very beautiful patterns, through which the imagination pictured furtive glances from dark eyes.

As there is no *trottoir* in this part of the city, and as all the people not only walk in any part

of the road that pleases them, but never dream of getting out of the way till warned by loud and repeated shouts of "O'ah! guarda! yamina! she-mala! e'rigla, ya wullet! e'dahr, ya bint!"—Take care! out of the way! to the right! to the left! your legs, O boy! your back, O girl! (all women are addressed as girl),—as moreover these streets—which lead to the port and the railway, and where commerce, in the practical form of actual sale and purchase, centres—are perpetually crowded with passengers, with mules, horses and carts; with bodies of donkies, frequently attended by only one or two drivers; with long strings of slow, patient, heavily-laden camels, with their uncouth forms and awkward gait, that make them look like artificial beasts got up for a pantomime;—it may be supposed that the passage is not an easy one.

After threading it with no small difficulty, we suddenly emerged on the square, round which centres the European and *fashionable* part of Alexandria.

Later, I saw portions of the desert; but they, for dreary aridity, were as nought to that great Sahara. The "square" is a narrow strip of ground about a quarter of a mile long, raised, railed in

with posts and chains, with a fountain at each end, consisting of a large, flat basin, with a feeble jet in the middle, only set to play on great occasions.

On either side are marble benches, generally occupied by slumberous *fellahs* (pronounce the word thus, reader, *fellách*, and understand that it means an Arab of the working-class, as *fellahah* signifies his helpmate, and *fellaheen* his order), and an attempt has been made to establish a double row of trees; but this has failed signally. There, far apart, stand the dusty, stunted ruins of the lebbeck and other trees that have been transported to this ungenial spot. Most of them have long since given up the attempt to live and grow, if they ever made it, which I doubt, and stand mere dust-coloured spectres; while a few struggle on, and feebly put forth stray bunches of leaves to become a speedy prey to the scorching sun, the white dust that infiltrates itself into everything, and to the sharp winds that sweep up the dreary length of the square.

Round this are built the houses, counting-houses, and offices of the European merchants, most of the hotels, and some of the principal shops; and I may here remark that nearly all the modern

houses and buildings in Alexandria being stuccoed, and the damp of the climate causing the composition to fall off in great flakes, they look dilapidated in a few years after they are built, more especially as the sun and dust affect the painting of the woodwork in a no less unfavourable manner. In fact, all the new part of the city, from its wretched architecture, from the number of houses, walls, and gateways commenced and abandoned, and from the causes already mentioned has the general aspect of a *new ruin*.

Passing along the dreary length of the square, through the mere slough that the brief rainy season, which had then just commenced, makes of all the streets within and all the roads without Alexandria, we soon reached my friends' house, which stood entirely detached. At either side of the doorway grew some young oleanders, and the beauteous convolvuli, so rich and magnificent in the East, and the sittal-hossn, or Lady of Beauty, a charming creeper with a profusion of lilac blossoms, like the convolvulus, and foliage resembling that of the passion-flower, climbed up to the balcony above, and thence twined by cords to the very roof.

At the door two or three Arab servants received

us; and, passing through a large, gloomy, empty hall, we made our way up an easy staircase to the set of rooms, all on one floor, like a Paris *appartement*, occupied by my hosts.

Most of the houses, as I afterwards found, are built in this way, and the large and high ones generally contain two or three families.

In this instance, however, only a small set of rooms on the ground floor at the back were inhabited by the proprietor of the house, while the rest, including the flat roof, on which Mr. R— had established a garden and pigeon-house, and from whence a splendid view of the harbour could be seen, was occupied by the R—'s.

And so here I was in "the land of Egypt." As I lay on a sofa, looking round the large, lofty, airy room, fitted up almost—though not quite—like a lady's drawing-room in England, it seemed hardly possible to realize the fact. Still less, feeling the warm air, seeing the glowing sunshine, and the summer flowers on the table, could I understand that we were within three weeks of Christmas. Before I left England there had been a heavy fall of snow, bitter winds, driving sleet, and I, shiverer that I am at all times, had cowered

over the fire in that state of absolute suffering that cold causes in chilly natures. And here was, if not actual summer, at least the genial aspect and temperature of that brief delightful period when the great heats are gone by, and that the approach, though not yet the actual presence, of autumn, comes to mellow all that summer has been bringing on to ripeness.

As I lay in that dreamy delightful state of perfect repose that attends the sense of fatigues and wanderings concluded—of having reached home—visitors were announced; and the Turkish costume of the one brought me back to a consciousness of where I was.

This visitor—who was accompanied by Mr. H. O—, the Alexandrian partner in one of the chief Oriental banking-houses, and the mainstay of the Pacha—was Hamil Bey, a man of family, who had been educated in Europe, and whose talents, accomplishments, and manners cause him to be considered as one of the best and most finished specimens of a Turkish gentleman. He spoke French, as do most of the educated Turks, fluently and correctly; and nothing save his dress—for the Turks, among the men especially, when

once they have reached middle-age, have seldom a very marked Oriental character of face—prominently testified against his being a European “of quality.”

Presently I wandered out on the balcony, to make a closer inspection of the flowers—for which I am at all times perfectly fanatical,—and to introduce myself to such of Mrs. R—’s many pets as found a lodging there. These were, three parrots : a gray-and-red one, which was wholly destitute of the sole advantage these birds are supposed to possess pre-eminently, that of fluency of speech—the creature uttered not a single word ; two green parakeets from Upper Egypt—one, a volatile, with a big head and beak and a diabolical temper, but gifted with certain conversational powers—the other, the most utter nullity of a parrot I ever beheld ; and lastly, a charming little monkey, hardly so big as a cat, with a wise little face set into great bushy white whiskers.

Lulu (the Pearl) and I soon became great friends. She was perfectly tame and very affectionate to those to whom she attached herself ; but her sense of justice was highly defective. If teased, or in any way offended by those of whom

she was fond, she never showed resentment to them, but immediately flew at any unoffending individual within reach, shrieking, chattering, grimacing, and worrying their clothes, though I never knew her to bite them. She delighted in being nursed and petted by her favourites ; and when they made a motion to leave her (for she was so horribly mischievous that it was absolutely necessary to keep her chained) she would cling to them, squeaking piteously.

Strangely human and tender was the expression of her little brown eyes as, when you rubbed her throat and chest, an attention she especially enjoyed, she looked up in your face, her head thrown back, her arms extended. Strange the movements of her little cold, black hands, as she played with and examined yours, searched among the folds of your dress, opened your sleeve to peer into it, carefully picked out pins, wherever the head of one appeared, and all with the grave intentness of purpose that you often see in a quiet child when its curiosity and interest are fully awakened.

But perhaps Lulu's appetite, and Lulu's powers of digestion were the most remarkable things

about her. On one occasion when she broke loose, a circumstance always attended with the most direful results, she ate the greater portion of a composition candle, a pot of pomatum, a quantity of tooth-powder, and the remains of an unfinished dose of rhubarb, and all, apparently, unattended with the slightest inconvenience.

The floor we occupied, consisting of twelve or thirteen rooms, nearly all large and lofty, formed a complete house of itself, and was most conveniently laid out; the greater number of the floors—carpeted in winter—were of a sort of coarse scagliola, black in the centre, with a fancy border in gray for summer coolness, and the bedroom-walls generally whitewashed, as the extreme dampness of the climate, especially in summer, very soon destroys paper-hangings, except where the aspect is south or south-west.

At one side, in an open barren space immediately under our windows, was established a group of Arab huts; and though at times we found the inhabitants troublesome neighbours, from their noise and dirt, it gave one, on the whole, by no means a bad opportunity of studying unobserved the domestic details of Fellaheen existence.

These huts, which were some seven or eight in number, and might measure about ten or twelve feet square, were fair specimens of Fellaheen architecture, as applied to the daily requirements of Fellaheen life. They were built of mud, with flat roofs; a low door in the middle, and a hole wherever it might be thought desirable to let in a little light or let out a good deal of smoke, though most of the cookery and other work requiring the use of fire was performed outside. The livestock consisted of a large number of fowls, which are abundant here, cheap, and very white and delicate, though somewhat dry; quantities of the horrid fawn-coloured, prick-eared dogs, which would be fierce if they were not such cowards, and which infest the town and its neighbourhood; a few large and hideously ugly cats; some goats, led out every day to pick up what food they might on the banks, now growing green with the rains, and one or two sheep.

Few men were visible in the huts, most of them being engaged as arrabagees (coachmen), saïses (grooms), bowwabs (porters), or soffragees (house-servants), and there were much fewer children than would generally be seen to the

same proportion of women in most European countries.

The women are commonly somewhat small, and of slender make, and, though the costume conceals the details of the figure, their general bearing is highly graceful. The dress consists of a loose wrapper of dark blue, or sometimes chequered blue and white cotton, draped about the body and limbs. From the head, which, like the men, they are most careful to keep covered, hangs a long mantle, if I may so call it, it having apparently no cut or shape, of the same colour and material; and a pair of full trousers, often of some brilliant European chintz, completes the costume.

The veil, or yashmac, which is black, is fastened across the face a little below the eyes, and is held in its place by an ornament, generally of brass, but sometimes decorated with coral beads, suspended from the forehead between the eyes. The fellahahs, however, especially when not beneath the ken of their lords and masters, are not always very particular on the subject of the veil, and often content themselves by holding a corner of the mantle over the lower part of their faces when looked at. I must say, that I think if their lords

and masters saw them with our eyes, they would deem that safety lay *not* in concealment, for, sooth to say, they are about as ugly a set of women, looking only at their faces, as I ever was among. The mask is broad and flat, especially broad just below the eyes; the lips thick, the nose coarse and snub, and the complexion of a dull brown, without any warmth in it. They generally tattoo their chins with indigo, which, at a little distance, gives them the appearance of having lately shaved a very black beard, and by no means adds to their beauty. But their eyes? Yes, I have not forgotten their eyes. I know, reader, you have been fretting and fuming, and feeding your imagination with notions of almond eyes and gazelle eyes, and all the ideas Eastern travellers have, from time immemorial, been putting into your head on the subject of the visual organs of Orientals, and I want to finish off the description of these Arab women's faces with a true explanation in the matter of these said eyes.

Well, they are not large; they are long—too long, and insufficiently opened; they have often a pretty expression, and they are surrounded with a thick line of kohl, which would give beauty and

effect to any eyes. When the face is uncovered, however, there is seldom anything very remarkable about them.

But imagine, reader, an ugly face, concealed with a thick veil and a penthouse head-gear, and from between veil and penthouse a vision of dark eyes flashing with the effect of kohl! Whose eyes would not look killing under such circumstances? Who might not pass for a Fatima, a Dudu, a Nourmahal?

To see an Arab woman in perfection you should follow her to the water, where she goes with her great earthen goulla, to fetch the quantity necessary for the day's supply. The goulla is of gray porous earth, of very graceful shape, and big enough to hold the smallest of the Forty Thieves.

She fills it, and then some one, probably another woman come on the same errand, assists her to lift it on her head, where these women carry all burdens, no matter how heavy. It is raised and placed on the circular cushion used to save the head from the immediate pressure, and she starts with it. But as yet it is not quite steady enough to be supported by the mere balance of the head and body, and she poises it by uplifting two handsome, brown bare

arms, decorated with massive silver bracelets or bangles, which are worn even by the poorest of the fellahs. And then she advances, holding it on either side with just the tips of her fingers pressed against the jar, till she is sure of its equilibrium; then the arms go down, and she walks on, swift, steady, erect, but without the slightest stiffness. I have often marvelled, not only at the immense weights the Arab women carry in this way, but at the extraordinary security with which they poise their burdens. I have seen them carry large flat baskets of eggs through the thickest crowds, without ever lifting a hand to them, even when pushed and jostled; and they, and the men also, will make their way safely through the throngs collected round such attractions as dancers, tumblers, snake-charmers, &c., with great trays, bearing perhaps sixteen or eighteen bowls of the sour goats' milk which forms one of the chief articles of food of the working-classes.

The children are generally very ugly and dirty, with lean limbs and great stomachs, and they seldom escape ophthalmia, which not unfrequently causes the loss of at least one eye. At Cairo the immense prevalence of this partial blindness strikes

you painfully, and in every part of Egypt blind beggars abound. They are—as who can wonder?—a privileged class; and I am inclined to suspect that the indulgences accorded them, the alms and the idleness their helpless condition insure them, are considered as ample equivalents for a lost sense, the possession of which would exclude them from such advantages.

In winter the children generally wear a cotton shirt, which they have a frequent practice of turning up over their shoulders: in summer, most of them go naked. Before they are able to walk much, the mothers carry them astride on one shoulder: as they are then still tolerably chubby, it is pretty to see the beautifully-formed little brown leg and foot hanging down on either side. They are frightfully passionate; and on the slightest provocation throw themselves into perfect paroxysms of fury, shrieking and stiffening themselves till they seem almost going into convulsions—a proceeding which the parents witness with stoical indifference.

The men, though also somewhat small and lightly built, are rarely ill-made, and many of them are perfect models of symmetry, as to form,

though their faces are very rarely handsome, being of much the same type as that I have described among the women. The saïses are really a sight to see. Dressed in close-fitting vests, generally of scarlet or crimson striped Damascus silk, very full white breeches, which are not properly speaking breeches but large bags with a hole at each corner to pass the foot through; flowing open white sleeves, the ends of which are caught back and fastened behind with a gold button, and the red tarboosh, they, carrying a wand, run before the carriages of their masters to clear the way. On they bound, without the slightest appearance of fatigue or effort, their finely-shaped brown arms, legs, and feet (though the latter are apt to flatten and spread from running barefoot) naked, at the full swing of the horses' trot. The Turks commonly make them run thus the whole distance they may have to go, which, especially in Rhamadan, where for a whole month they touch neither food nor drink, nor even enjoy the solace of a pipe, from sunrise to sunset, tries them frightfully, and even at times causes death from exhaustion. Europeans, however, are commonly more merciful, only

letting them run when getting in or out of the town, or when the streets are at all crowded. You will see them clinging on to any part of the back of the carriage, springing down, running on in front, then falling behind and resuming their places while the horses are proceeding at a rapid pace, with the most unruffled ease and composure.

The Arabs who have fallen under Turkish, and, I am sorry to say, European dominion, are undoubtedly a degraded race, in so far that they lay aside all courage, self-respect, and self-reliance before their too often tyrannical and contemptuous masters.

Nevertheless, I think they possess many qualities and many capabilities that might, in time and with proper and patient treatment, be developed.

They are simple, tractable, honest, uncomplaining, and I should say, from the unwearying and affectionate attention they pay to the spoiled European children they are often put in charge of, capable of real attachment. Their intelligence is, I think, of a low order, or it may be that the treatment they are apt to experience and the place

they hold, keeps it dormant ; nevertheless, when once instructed in the routine of their daily duties, they often make excellent servants. I have never been better waited upon than by the R—'s soffragee, a gentle, submissive young man, who rejoiced in the name of Shaheen, the Hawk, and I got quite to like his kindly, patient, brown face, which I never saw clouded by a frown, even in the trying period of Rhamadan, which assuredly must prove no small trial to the *morale* as well as to the *physique* of the Arab.

The dress of the soffragee (the name is derived from soffra, a table, as arrabagee is from arrabeéh, a carriage) nearly resembles that of the saïs, except that the hanging sleeves are done away with, and that over the inner vest is worn a jacket. Shoes or red slippers are also used, and generally stockings ; but sometimes, especially of a morning, these are dispensed with. Often the whole costume is of white cotton, which looks better than anything else ; but sometimes the soffragee rejoices in a suit of coloured cloth, generally of a light very ugly shade of brown, or violet, rather handsomely braided, and a striped silk scarf folded flat round his waist. When he goes out in winter

he wears a sort of loose greatcoat, with an absurd hood, that when raised sticks up in a point like a sugarloaf. This the arrabagee also wears.

The traditionary and established notions that connect the Arab and his horse in such touching relations may be, and I believe are, to a certain degree, justified as regards the Bedouin and other desert Arabs, who are free from the bondage of a civilization that merely enslaves without extending to them any of its benefits; but, as a general rule, the fellah and the saïs are apt to treat their horses as the Turk treats them. Moreover, the horses' shoes are mere flat plates, covering the entire sole, so that on stony or slippery ground he has no hold whatever for his foot, and he is broken and ridden with a cruel bit that keeps him constantly thrown on his haunches, and that, of course, completely spoils his mouth.

Among themselves the Arabs are passionate as children, and, like them, express their feelings by indulging in a sort of scratching, scrambling fist-cuffs, and by roaring and blubbing with all the strength of their lungs. I remember one day hearing a row in our Arab colony, and on going to "study the manners and customs of the people,"

as was my wont when anything unusual seemed to be taking place, I beheld a man standing at the door of one of the huts, howling like a thrashed schoolboy, and apparently remonstrating with a circle of eight women, young and old, who had collected round him, and were vociferating at the tops of their harsh voices, while one old crone, who shouted louder than the rest, threw handfuls of dust on her head in a highly tragic fashion. On inquiring, I learned that the gentleman in question had been bestowing condign punishment on his spouse, one of the ladies there present; that his uncle, dwelling in an adjoining hut, had taken the said lady's part; and in order to bring all connubial differences to a happy conclusion, and satisfy his sense of the duties of a pacificator, had thrashed the *sposo*, who, from the position in which I found him, seemed to be strongly inculcating to his fair persecutors the doctrine of "no preachee and floggee too."

CHAPTER III.

ALEXANDRIA.

Country about Alexandria—Dogs—The Canal—Pastré Gardens—Alexandrians Peints par Eux-mêmes—Alexandrian Children—Fruit Trees—Trees and Flowers—Flowers—A Word of Acknowledgment.

ON the day after my arrival I was taken out for a drive, and had my first view of the environs of Alexandria. On the whole, the impression was not favourable.

Passing through one of the strongly fortified gates, you emerge, in some places at once on the barren desert, in others on the parts that, being capable of producing shayeer (barley), fool (beans), or berseem (lucerne)—almost the only crops grown in the neighbourhood of Alexandria—are cultivated after the extremely primitive fashion of these countries, which consists chiefly in copious irriga-

tion. All this ground, which is nearly flat, is intersected with very bad roads or avenues, planted at either side with stunted, dusty lebbecks and cypresses, which yield little or no shade; and sometimes you pass by a garden of date-palms and bananas, rearing themselves above the crumbling walls or thick hedges of prickly-pear which surround them. Where these roads lay through the actual desert, you see on either side nought but little hillocks, or ridges of sand, which, when you know that in nearly every instance the remains of the great and ancient city lie below, assume an interest and importance in your eyes their mere appearance is little calculated to awaken.

In some places the desert about here is covered with a little hardy flower, much resembling Virginia stock. In the morning it is a mere scentless weed, but a few hours after noon it begins to emit a delicate odour, which gains in strength till from about four o'clock the perfume fills the air.

Here and there is scattered an Arab village. Most of the dwellings are merely the mud huts I have already described; but beside these are a few little brick or stone houses, with windows formed

with the graceful cusped arch commonly seen in Egyptian architecture, and in some instances filled up with the beautiful turned trellis-work. Few of the houses, however, are completed inside ; and the families they contain commonly huddle together in one of the three or four rooms of which they consist.

From a corner of the roof hangs an aloe, looking, as it swings in the air, like some gigantic brown spider or other uncanny insect-monster. Its use is to avert the influence of the evil eye.

Round about are grouped dirty children, goats, pigs, fowls, and a few ugly, unshapely, iron-gray buffalo cows, with an occasional sheep. The dogs are everywhere : in the city, in the villages, even in the fields, you see them, skulking, wolfish, half-tamed. As you pass they crouch—then dash after you, barking savagely, showing their fierce fangs, and bristling with rage and hatred of the European. Their enmity even extends to your dog, for if you have a dog of any of our breeds with you, they will probably fall upon it, and place it in considerable jeopardy ; but you have only to pursue them with a whip, or stick, and the whole tribe will flee before you.

But as all roads lead to Rome, so do all roads

here lead to The Canal, that prodigious monument of Eastern power, Eastern despotism, and Eastern disregard of human life. This canal—called the Mahmoudieh, from its founder—forty miles long, and wide and deep enough to be navigable for large boats and steamers of some size, was excavated by Mahommed Ali in six weeks, at the cost of thirty thousand Arab lives. No food or water being found for the workmen in the desert, and no convenient means existing for conveying them thither, the fellaheen, flogged and driven from their villages to the performance of their *unpaid* work, did as much of it as the whip could get out of their starved and parched bodies, and then fell down and died, and *were dug into the mounds of sand on either side the excavation as fast as they expired!*

Now, however, *nous avons changé tout cela*, and all memory of this tragedy so lately enacted is effaced by the present appearance of the bank of the canal for some way beyond Alexandria. On the one shore (the other is divided by a bank, on which runs the railway to Cairo and Suez, from the great Lake Mareoutis) are built the country houses and laid out the gardens of some of the

wealthiest inhabitants of Alexandria—Turks, Jews, and Christians — and before them runs, planted on the bank with trees of some size, the fashionable promenade of the Alexandrians. Here, at least, are shade and some beauties, not of architecture, certainly, but of cultivated nature, for each of these houses is surrounded by an extensive garden, and here lie the Pastré and Rosetta Gardens, the former belonging to the Viceroy, and by him placed at the service of the public (he purposed, I am told, making them a gift to the town); and the latter, lately in the possession of El Hami Pacha, his brother, who died some short time since, leaving his affairs in a position that places the greater part of his property in the hands of his creditors.

Certainly it must be admitted that the Alexandrian beau-monde profits by the Pacha's generosity. Towards four o'clock of a fine day, crowds of carriages and numbers of saddle-horses may be seen collected at the gate of the Pastré Gardens, which cover several acres, and are productive in fruit and flowers.

Descending from your carriage, you walk up the long wide alley that leads to the centre of the

grounds, beneath the shade of trees of some size. On either side are low walls, about knee-high, on which are placed at intervals stone vases with plants. Here and there an Arab gardener offers you a bouquet, the acceptance of which entails the presentation of a backsheesh of some small coin. Arrived in the centre, you find a space, with trees planted singly or in groups, and here, walking about, or seated on iron chairs and sofas, you behold the élite of Alexandrian society, with occasionally a sprinkling of Jews and Levantines, whose Oriental costume adds much to the effect of the scene.

Most amusing is it to sit on one of these chairs, and watch the passers-by, and hear the remarks thereon.

A lady, tall, rather handsome, and very well dressed, attended by an extremely insignificant gentleman, sweeps by, her rich silk gown trailing on the damp gravel, and its voluminous folds seeming to carry him along in the eddy.

"Mrs. L. in *another* new gown! and look at the velvet cloak: fifteen guineas never paid for it. That woman's extravagance is something *too* impudent! I should like to know who pays."

"Who? her husband; why he can very well afford it."

"What! L.? why he came here three years ago without a rap, and his business is a small concern. He's only third in the house, and very little money passes through their hands."

"*Their* hands, maybe. But L.'s a sharp fellow; he's got hold of—" (here is mentioned the name of some member of the Pacha's family, or it may be the Pacha himself).

"Oh, *that's* it!"

"Yes. He got round him somehow, and the Pacha's given him a contract to supply him with Paris kid gloves for ten years. He gives him lambskin at twenty-four francs a dozen, and charges him 5*l.*"

(A late arrival from Europe loquitur). "But I thought the Pacha was educated in Paris. He must know better than that?"

"My dear sir, you don't understand these matters. Of course he knows better, and he never wears the gloves; but when a fellow gets into favour with any of the powers that be, which he generally can contrive to do, if he can but succeed in amusing them, that's the way—if he

calls himself a gentleman—they reward him. They give him a contract or a commission; he, if he's sharp and knows what he's about, supplies them with a worthless article, and pockets a few hundreds per cent. Of course if the thing's good for anything he makes it thousands."

"Thousands! Come!"

"Thousands, I tell you. A man I know got a commission to purchase some magnificent mirrors for one of the Viceroy's palaces. He got them; they *were* magnificent, and they cost him 700*l.* a-piece. He put every one down at 10,000*l.*"*

"And was paid?"

"And was paid."

"Monstrous!"

"*Que voulez vous?* If the princes choose to let themselves be cheated knowingly, who's to blame?"

"It's a mistake for that L. to show himself beside his wife. Deuced fine woman!"

"That's just it. Other people think so. Ha! here comes Dick Horton, I thought so—watch! L. has his eye on her, notice her bow as they pass each other; do you see! Dick goes by on her side, and she lets drop, under shelter of her crino-

* A fact.

line, the bunch of violets she was carrying in her hand. Dick's dog picks it up and carries it to his master! Ha, ha! well done."

"Here comes Mrs. B. Did you ever see such a show as the woman makes of herself! a mountain crowned with a soup-plate, and all the colours of the rainbow on her! At her age and with her size to wear that hat!"

"What age do you suppose her to be?"

"Between forty and fifty."

"She's not five-and-twenty. But then you know she's a Levantine. Most of them come to something like that before they're thirty. I remember when B. married her; she was then fifteen, and charming, but already threatening to become what you see. She was engaged to a Greek; but of course when she found B. could be got to marry her, she threw the Greek over."

"I shouldn't have thought B. any great catch either."

"No. But these women will jump at any French or Englishman, the latter especially, in preference to one of their compatriots."

"And do such matches answer?"

"*Cela dépend*: if the man wants a doll to

play with; a child who can barely read or write, and never does either if she can help it; who talks nonsense in three or four languages; who is not without a talent for cookery, and who dotes upon dress—for which she has *not* a talent, as you may perceive—he may get on well enough with her. Unfortunately in a very few years there comes to be so *very* much of her! A tremendous ‘ar-rmful of joy,’ as Pat Whelan says.”

“Ah, Pat; what’s become of him?”

“Got into favour with the Pacha, by telling him Irish stories and coarse jokes; adopted Mahometanism; was made a bey; and is worth about 200,000*l*.”

“Poor Pat; I’m glad he’s fallen on his feet at last. He was always a good fellow. But I say, is it true that G. is going to marry old F.’s daughter?”

“Not a bit of it. He flirted with her tremendously, as you know: Père F. sees nothing till he fancies G. is fairly caught. Then he sends H. to him and asks when he would like the marriage to take place? that the elder girl’s wedding with J. comes off in May, and wouldn’t it be a good thing if the two took place together?”

G. replies he'll wait till some Sunday next week, and shies off. The girl tells everybody how she's been treated; but still she makes tender eyes, and heaves tremendous sighs whenever they meet."

And now it is to be presumed you have had enough of the private histories of some of the *élite* of Alexandria, and you turn for relief to where a group of children are what is called playing under the charge of a *sais* or *soffragee*. But you find the Arab is the only child of the lot, the sole promoter and generally the sole enjoyer of the sport.

The babes are all fat, dull, lymphatic, pasty children, who walk as if their limbs were cramped, who seem, and generally are, incapable of a race, a shout or a laugh, and who are, moreover so frightfully encumbered with clothing—the girls being crinoline up to the neck—that they look shapeless bundles of gaudy and ill-assorted linen-drapery. In vain the Arab dodges behind trees, flings balls, runs after them, challenges his charges to do the like. Sometimes the slow blood is roused into an attempt to follow his lead, and generally the result is a roll, when you see the bundle of linen-drapery become an utterly indis-

tinguishable mass of wallowing *chiffons*. On these occasions the creatures seldom have the energy to cry, but being hoisted to their feet by the deeply concerned Arab, they walk off in solemn unconcern, with the dipping fore-and-aft gait common to them.

Sometimes they are attended by an Arab, Berber, or Nubian nurse, who is as slow and stolid as themselves. She is dressed in white from head to foot, except that her slippers are generally yellow, and anything so ghostly I never saw, especially when she belongs to either of the latter races, for then you see a pair of coal-black hands, and between her shroud-like head-gear and veil a strip of coal-black face and glittering eyes, appearing like blots on her snow-white drapery.

The Pastré Gardens are not beautifully laid out ; no Egyptian gardens are, with perhaps the exception of the vice-regal ones at Shoubra near Cairo, which are much better in this respect than any others I have seen ; but in this favoured soil and climate a little cultivation and abundant irrigation will produce anything.

Here are the date-palms, straight, and tall, and plummy, with their clusters of golden or purple

fruit: the graceful bananas, each leaf some four or five feet long, green, rich, and glossy, overarch-
ing and hiding the bunches of its amber produce: lemon, orange, and Mandarin orange, whose per-
fume, when in blossom, ladens the air: the mish-
mish or apricot, the almond, the custard-apple,
and many other fruits of East and West, not for-
getting strawberries, which, though small and
poor in appearance, are deliciously flavoured.

Then there are bamboos of great size; various
kinds of acacias, some bearing vast clusters of
golden blossoms with long pistil and anthers of
richest scarlet: Palma Christi or castor-oil trees,
with beautiful, luxuriant, shaded foliage; crocea
lantana, in real trees, studded over with orange-
scarlet blossoms; mimosas, daphnes, oleanders,
roses, jasmins, honeysuckles, golden bignonias,
daturas, with white bells six or eight inches long,
great bushes of geranium, and oh such point-
setias! Nothing, I think, in this wilderness of
bloom struck me so much as the pointsetias and
some of the convolvuli. Fancy, reader, you who
probably only know this gorgeous exotic as a
plant some fifteen or eighteen inches high, with
one tulip-like cherry-coloured bloom, half leaf,

half flower, crowning its dwarfed stem,—fancy, I say, this plant grown up into a wide-spreading tree eighteen or twenty feet high, bearing hundreds of glowing blooms, some twelve inches or more in diameter, waving like so many glorious oriflammes all over the tree: for here they soon quit the tulip shape, and opening wide their faces to the sun, the petals, if I may so call them, spread out and fall backwards. When the daturas, with their long white bells, and these magnificent pointsetias are planted together in groups, as they often are, the effect may be imagined.

The convolvuli, as I have said, grow here as I never saw them, nor imagined they could grow. There is a sky-blue one, so vast in size, so divine in colour, so lavish in growth and in blossom, that I used to be dazzled by it. It climbs, and trails, and twines, and *heaps* itself over everything it can reach in such sheets of azure that it is like a patch of heaven come down to us.

Another kind, of a rich imperial velvety purple, grows, if possible, more vigorously, though it does not bloom quite so luxuriantly. It is perennial (the sky-blue is an annual), and receiving no severe check in the winter, it keeps on increasing

in size and power till it climbs in great ropy clusters to the roofs of houses and into the highest trees, garnishing them with a beauty not their own. Beside these are the beauteous sittal-hossn, already mentioned, which blooms all the year round; purple passion-flower, and a variety of other splendid creepers, which unfortunately were not in blossom when was in Egypt.

Sunday is the great day of resort for the Pastré Gardens, and then you see a greater variety of classes and nations than on week-days, and the *jeunesse dorée* of Alexandria generally musters pretty strong. The display is not brilliant as a whole, but there are some marked exceptions; and the place boasts among its European residents a few, a very few, whose appearance, manners, and conversation show that the transplantation has produced no ill effects.

It were insidious in a work like this to mention names; but I bear, though silent on this point, none the less a sense of sincere gratitude for much kindness, attention, and hospitality received, and of real personal regard for some of those among whom I, a stranger, passed a particularly agreeable sojourn.

CHAPTER IV.

SANITARY.

Fever — Rain — Egyptian Skies — Khamseen — Effects of Climate on Health — Consumption — Ophthalmia — Arab Endurance—Influence of Climate.

BUT every medal has its reverse; and after a few weeks' sojourn in Alexandria, I began to be conscious that a constant headache which had fixed itself on me, accompanied by a general *malaise*, were so increasing, that a crisis of some kind appeared imminent. And soon it came. On Christmas-day my hosts and I were bidden to a feast, and all the time I sat at the luxuriously spread table, and all through the evening, I felt overpowered with the chilly, oppressive languor that tells of fever at hand.

I slept ill, and next day down upon me came the enemy, with burning heats and death-like chills, that shook me into shivering not to be con-

trolled : with a blinding weight of headache, a parched mouth, and that absurd, unreasoning irritability that makes every movement, every sound, from the buzzing of the fly, that *will* try to settle on your hand or on your face, to the voice that kindly inquires into your state, feelings, and wishes, an offence and a trouble to you. People mean it very kindly, no doubt, you think, but why will they come and stare at your swollen disfigured face, and feel the pulse that thumps so in your burning wrist ; you don't want to be looked at, and you don't want to be touched, and what good can either looking at or touching you do ?

“Can you take anything ? is there anything you would like ?” Take anything ? what can I take ? *Like* anything ? the question of food is loathsome to me, and though I am thirsty, I don't know what to drink—everything is horrible and nauseous alike. “Shouldn't you do well to see the doctor ?” No, I shouldn't. I don't know the doctor, I've no faith in him ; he isn't my own dear doctor far away over the sea, and I won't have him. I'll die or get well without his help ; and just now I think dying would be much the best and simplest way of settling matters.

Reader, I beg you distinctly to understand that I am not such a churl as to *say* anything of this kind. I believe, on the whole, I try not to show myself ungrateful for all the attentions bestowed on me ; but there are two natures struggling within me, or rather two Spirits ; my own, and the demon of Fever. The one trying to appear thankful, courageous, cheerful even ; the other suggesting all sorts of peevish, miserable discontents, and discourteous and absurd exigencies.

When I am left alone matters are but little better—the question is if they are at all so, and I am disposed to reply in the negative.

Here my own Spirit tells me that my friends have a thousand things to occupy them,—that they must have seen I was utterly overpowered and unable to talk ; and that they no doubt thought I should really be better left quietly to myself for awhile, and that I might, perhaps, get some sleep.

All very well ; but, says the Spirit of Fever, “you, in the meantime, are left alone, suffering and deserted. The world goes on its way, caring not how you fare. Far, far away are your own people, your own home ; here you may die—are

alone in the land of the stranger,—and who will miss you?”

All this while I know quite well I am in no danger of dying just at present; but somehow or other the putting the thing in this way gives me a sort of morbid satisfaction which I like to indulge. There is a dreary grandiloquence in the sound of that phrase “dying an alien in the land of the stranger,” that tickles the ears of the Spirit of Fever.

Then comes night, with horrors to which the day's misery is as nought. Through the long, long, lonely hours of sleeplessness I lie; now falling for one moment into a doze, so haunted with suffering, and that sense of its being living and tangible that affects you to such a degree in fever-sleep, that I feel I *must* wake up and fight against it, or be for ever conquered; now lying with parched and burning mouth, and weary eyes, watching the objects in the room, distorted by my fevered vision and the dim light of the night-lamp; now tormented with the peevish hum of the mosquitoes, buzzing about my net curtains with frantic efforts to penetrate them. At times they come between my bed and the wall, and I

have the grim satisfaction of crushing them, and seeing the little black blot on the white-washed wall.

One night, by way of improving this state of things, I took twelve drops of laudanum. Whether the dose might have been too small, or whether taking it was a mistake altogether, I cannot say: the result, however, was a night of alternate stupefaction and delirium, which effectually prevented my resorting to a similar resource a second time.

On the fourth day I began to mend, and having turned the corner, I made tolerably good progress; though the distaste for food which I was long in recovering from, joined to the pulling down my voyage had caused, somewhat retarded my restoration.

By this time the weather had got a good deal colder, and we sometimes (chiefly on my account) had a fire lit in the little American stove in Mrs. R.'s sitting-room.

Hardly any of the houses here have regular fire-places; and indeed, except to chilly mortals like myself, there are few days when a fire is really necessary. In my bed-room, which had a southern aspect, I never felt the want of it; and I have

known *far* colder weather in May in England and even in France than I felt during all the time I was in Egypt, though the rainy season, which seldom endures over a month—that of December—lasted this year through the greater part of November and January as well.

And how it *does* rain when it sets about it! Up on a sudden from the sea comes a fierce sound of the wrath and tumult of angry elements, and down comes the rain, often accompanied by great hailstones, in blinding, driving sheets of water. From the roof it pours in torrents; through the streets it whirls and eddies; to windward through the frames of closed windows, it makes its way, streaming down the walls and on floors, so that sponge, cloths, and buckets are in immediate requisition. And having spent its fury, the clouds break: out comes the sun, and the blue sky smiling serenely, as who should say, "I am appeased; you must not mind my little ebullitions:—I am of a hasty temper, it is true, but I am never sullen here, nor do I keep from you the light of my countenance for any length of time."

Even the rainy season is interspersed with very many lovely days, and the brilliancy and clearness

of the atmosphere are beyond all description, particularly of an evening, just before the brief twilight veils the world. Often as we returned from our drive, about half-past five or six o'clock, (the winter days are longer and the summer shorter here than in Europe,) I used to gaze in rapture on the sight presented to us. Unspeakably clear and distinct lies the outline of the low sand ridges, dark against a "daffodil sky," varying into rose, blue, and pale lilac; black, and still, and sharp, as though cut in metal, stand up the bare stems and plumed summits of the palms on a background of burning gold, like the heads of saints in the old Byzantine pictures, and presently out of the dark blue above grows into brilliance a glittering crescent, with one large diamond of a star. All the East is in that picture.

Another effect of atmosphere is very striking: when a few days of sunshine have changed the mud to dust, it being very deep and very fine, rises in dense clouds with the passage of every vehicle, and hangs for some time in the air. Towards sunset the level rays penetrate it, and when you are going westward, you see between you and the sky a golden veil, inexpressibly glowing and

beautiful, through which all objects are invested with a mysterious glory. Occasionally when the sunset is a very bright red, this veil is rose-coloured.

I heard much of the horrors of the khamseen,* or land wind; but I confess the few specimens I experienced of its effect, (I was told they were not bad ones,) seemed in nowise formidable. It comes warm and heavy, and so laden with the finest particles of the desert sand that in vain you seek to exclude them. In a few hours, with closed doors and windows, you find a layer of white dust over every object, and whatever you touch is rough and gritty with it. So fine and penetrating is this dust that it is almost impossible to get entirely rid of it, and you see the delicate portions of all carved work, and the indentations of stuffed chairs and sofas permanently whitened with it. It also affects the lustre on silks and ribbons. For my part, however, I felt none of the sense of suffering and oppression it is supposed to cause; and was often only aware of its being a khamseen by finding the day warmer than usual, and by seeing and

* The *kh* in Arabic being guttural, English people commonly pronounce it as *h*. The French pronounce the *k* only.

feeling the deposit of dust, in a greater or less degree.

Frost here is utterly unknown; and in winter the thermometer seldom ranges below 60 or above 66 or 67 deg. Fahrenheit. The sea-breeze, however, which blows pretty constantly, often makes it feel colder than you would expect from the state of the thermometer, especially in the morning and evening. In summer the climate is extremely damp; and gloves, silks, velvets, and especially black lace, if kept in closets or chests, become spotted and mildewed if not constantly examined and exposed to the air.

I made inquiries as to the influence of the climate on various diseases; but in most instances it was difficult to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion--with regard to consumption and disorders of the chest and lungs in particular. From all I could gather, however, it appeared to me that where there was only a tendency to these disorders, the uniformity of the temperature was favourable to the patient; but when consumption, *especially* when accompanied with spitting of blood, had actually set in, it in nowise delayed a fatal termination. I merely state this, however, as being the general

impression gathered from my inquiries on the subject, and by no means as an ascertained and accredited fact.

Consumption is by no means uncommon among the Alexandrian Arabs; but that is easily accounted for by the insufficiency of their clothing in cold weather, by exposure, by the dampness of their mud huts in the rainy season, the floors of which are often flooded in the sudden squalls, and among the saïses—a large body, as everybody in Alexandria keeps horses or donkeys—by the terrible fatigue they often endure in running, and the chills that frequently follow from waiting in the cold when bathed in perspiration; and this often in Rhamadan. The seeds of such diseases must very commonly be laid to the way in which Arab mothers expose their infants. You may often see them wrapped in a few rags, lying on the wet ground outside the mud hut, while the woman is engaged in washing, cooking, or winnowing beans or barley, all of which operations she performs squatted on the earth. She never either sits or stands at any employment.

Rheumatism seems to be unfavourably affected by the climate, and most new comers pay a tribute

to it by more or less severe attacks of low fever and diarrhoea: this last is sometimes a rather obstinate malady, and occasionally, if neglected, turns to dysentery. Ophthalmia appears to be the curse of the country; but, except in the instance of very young children, who, when born in Egypt, seldom arrive at the age of eighteen months without suffering from it in some degree, it is almost entirely confined to the natives. There exists among many Europeans an impression that ophthalmia is caused by the attacks of a small fly. This is, however, entirely erroneous, and has probably originated from the fact that flies, which swarm in Egypt so as to become a perfect pest, are attracted to the diseased eyes, and with children especially, allowed to collect round them. You will see these brown imps lying in the sun with their faces, breasts, and limbs speckled with flies, which they do not take the trouble to brush away. Indeed endurance, or it may be callousness, is at once the virtue and the curse of the Arab. Hardly any amount of suffering, discomfort, or ill-usage will make him complain, except when his temper is excited, then he screams and blubbers rather with rage than pain.

In his usual condition he is ill-lodged, insufficiently clothed, very poorly fed, and often brutally ill-treated. He is called khamsir, kelb, tor, (pig, dog, ox): blows fall upon him thick and often unjustly. He is frequently, when there is any press of labour, either in government works or sometimes in those of private companies or other bodies whose might makes their right, forced to work unpaid: yet to all he bows his patient shoulders, the poor uncomplaining beast of burden, acknowledging Turk or European as his born enslaver and tyrant, and not seeming to bear him any ill-will for fully exercising the supposed right. Occasionally when he has been for some time in the service of Europeans who have treated him reasonably well, he plucks up a little more spirit, and ventures to put in claims for increase of wages, or other appeals, commonly on the subject of floos (money), but when refused, he generally abandons the question with a slight gesture of disappointment.

To return, however, to my hygienic observations, I should say that the winter climate of Egypt is, take it on the whole, as healthy as it is delightful. Of the summer I have no experience, but it seems

generally accorded that it is trying in a particular degree to Europeans, and especially English women, if they do not occasionally return to recruit their strength with native air. In the summer and autumn you see few but pale faded faces, and a general appearance of debility pervades our countrywomen's aspect; these, however, often give way more or less during the course of the winter, and a timely visit to Europe while thus "on the mend" generally sets matters to rights. Men seem to suffer but little from the effects of the climate.

A few miles from Alexandria, in the desert and on the coast, is the village of Ramlegh, and here the Alexandrians resort some time in the summer for sea-bathing—a great resource. As rain at this season is unknown, they commonly live in the large tents used for desert travelling, or in tents of the simplest construction, covered in with matting, business men going into the town daily in the cool morning, and returning after sunset.

CHAPTER V.

EGYPT'S PEOPLE AND PROSPECTS.

Mohammed Ali—His Descendants—Nasli Hanoum—Nasli Hanoum's Letter—A Happy Family—The Pacha—Halim Pacha—A Prophecy.

BRIEF as was my sojourn in the East, it was yet long enough to make me comprehend in a considerable degree the spell that lies on the land; the great slumberous spirit that still, and awful, and immovable as its Sphinx, its Memnon, and its Pyramids, spreads over all the shadow of its mysterious presence, and, like a giant vampire, hushes its people into fatal rest, while it sucks away their life-blood.

That Egypt, and especially Alexandria, boast among their adopted children a good many active and enterprising men who, in pursuit of their callings, "rise up early and so late take rest,"

there is no doubt. Nevertheless the tendency of the place is decidedly unfavourable to the exercise of any exertion of mind or body, and has a numbing effect even on the feelings. "Malesch!" says the Arab, come what may: never mind, it is nothing,—it is of no consequence. He falls down and hurts himself; he picks himself up and limps away, repeating "Malesch!" He breaks your favourite piece of China, he lames your pet horse, "Malesch!" it will be all the same in a hundred years hence; life is too short and of too little value for one to trouble oneself about these details.

The cause of this lies not, I take it, in the climate; for the sun that burns as hotly in the South warms the blood in men's veins, stirs their instincts, excites their feelings and their passions. They love ardently; they hate bitterly; gratitude they feel; revenge they thirst for. Not so here. Indolence, indifference, immutability, fatalism; these great curses lie on the heads of all, and never never will be shaken off. Egypt, as far as Orientalism is concerned, is the land of the Past. Its grasp holds her fast and surely. Like her own khamseen, it comes slowly from the desert, that

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The Oriental, as a race, is worn out ; the "sick man's" malady is decrepitude, and no elixir will be found to restore him, no fountain of Jouvence can renew his lost youth.

And this is the case physically as well as morally. I have already remarked the small proportion of children you see to the women among the Arabs. Among the Turks the case is far more remarkable. Take the instance of the reigning family.

Mohammed Ali left seven sons and two daughters. Of these remain three individuals, Saïd Pacha, the present Viceroy*, Abd-el-Halim, and a daughter, Zenab. Ibrahim, his son and successor, who took the reins of government when his father's state rendered him incapable of holding them longer, survived him only a year, leaving three sons, of whom one, Ahmed, was drowned in the Nile four years ago. To him succeeded Abbas Pacha, son of Toussoon, one of the dead sons of Mohammed Ali.—His brief viceroyalty, beginning in 1849, terminated in 1854, not without strongest suspicions (to leave the door ajar to charity) of foul play. He left one son, El Hami, —now dead.

* Now also dead.

Of this family of nine children there therefore remain, fourteen years after the father's death, six persons: Saïd, the present Viceroy; Abd-ul-Halim and Zenab, his brother and sister; Ismail and Mustapha Pacha, sons of Ibrahim, and the next in succession; and Toussoon, the only child of Saïd Pacha, the reigning Pacha.

It is probable that death will ere long yet further reduce the small remnant, Saïd Pacha's health being in a more than precarious condition.

I learned, while in Egypt, some touching traits of the strong domestic affection subsisting between the members of this nearly exhausted race. Most of them live under the perpetual and perfectly well-founded impression that their already "brief and evil days" are in considerable risk of being cut yet shorter by the instrumentality of some other member or members of their own family. I have already alluded to the death of Abbas Pacha, and the generally received idea that it was caused by foul means.

The immediate instrument is supposed to have been Nasli Hanoum,* his aunt, though the rest of

* Hanoum, or Hanem—a title signifying great or high.

the family seem to have connived at this little domestic arrangement.

The fair Nasli's history is one tissue of vice, infamy, and cruelty. One of her slaves having endeavoured to escape from her, she, on the girl's being recaptured, stabbed her to the heart with her own hand, and ceased not to strike her with the dagger till she lay at her feet, a mass of wounds; and the scandals of her life, which she endeavoured to smother by means of the bow-string and the waters of the Nile, were such that Mohammed Ali, her own father, actually gave orders to have her assassinated, a fate from which she with difficulty escaped at the intercession of one of her brothers.


After her father's death she became so obnoxious to some of the other members of her family that she was kept a sort of prisoner in her own palace, and allowed to see none but those admitted by them. I have seen the translation of a most curious and interesting letter written by her at this period, under the following circumstances. A certain family laid a claim before Saïd Pacha, who talked of paying the debts of some of the defunct members of his family, for a large

sum of money, promised them by Nasli Hanoum for services rendered her at the risk of their lives, and in support of the claim the letter in question was produced.

This epistle states that the writer is in daily fear of her life from her family: she says that, as she cannot leave her palace of her own accord, she has written to the Sultana to beg that she will send, desiring her to come to Constantinople. That some of her friends, relatives of the claimants, have, in peril of their own lives, contrived, in the disguise of fellahs, to find shelter with her gardener; that she and they have held communication by means of letters concealed in loaves of bread, and that by them she has sent the appeal in question to Constantinople. That after their departure the conspiracy was discovered, and they were pursued, but safely escaped; and in consequence of their services she desires the sum in question shall be paid for her to them or their representatives. No doubt seemed to be entertained of the genuineness of the document. Whether the claim has been satisfied—it was under discussion when I saw the letter—is another question.

Abbas Pacha was the one of all the family whom Nasli most feared; and it appears that as every one of the other members was under similar apprehensions with regard to his own safety, they entertained the proposition of the tender aunt to provide for their security as Elizabeth did for hers in the case of her cousin, Mary Stuart. Such, at least, is the universally accredited opinion in Egypt; and more than once, during my stay, there were reports afloat of conspiracies being on foot against the life of the Viceroy. One of the Pachas, I do not at this moment remember which, touches no food but what is prepared in his harem by his own mother, and no drink but water kept in a bottle filled and sealed by her. And this is the Egypt of the 19th century !

Setting apart the moral and religious side of the question, I take it that the harem system, where the children of one father are the chance offspring of any of the four wives the law allows him, or of any slave of the harem who may for the moment strike his fancy—for all children, whether born of wife or concubine, are held alike, and entitled to similar privileges—goes far to produce this total absence of family feeling. Indeed, the



jealousies that cannot fail often to subsist between the women thus compelled to live in perpetual contact, are frequently, no doubt, transmitted to their children, and thus the seeds of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, are sown at their birth, and grow with their growth, bearing the fruit we see.

The Viceroy is an extremely jolly fellow: easy, good-natured, hating trouble and business of any kind; fond of splendour and good living, and of fun and coarse jokes; and whoever can succeed in amusing him with these and with any absurd buffoonery, may rob him to what extent they please, he being perfectly aware of the fact, and seldom resisting the grossest impositions. It is related that a man who had long carried on this course with him, once attempted a piece of cheating so enormous that the Pacha's patience was exhausted, and he refused to submit to it. Accordingly, when the culprit came to pay his daily visit, Saïd Pacha, in a rage, declared his intention of having nothing more to do with such a robber. No way abashed, the somewhat favourite quietly demanded, "And who am I to rob if it be not your Highness?" The result was

the Pacha's bursting into a hearty laugh, taking the man again into favour, and ordering the sum of money at first demanded to be paid him. And this is the son of the old lion, Mohammed Ali, before whom men bowed their heads and trembled. Abd-ul-Halim, commonly known as Halim Pacha, is, I am told, a man of very superior manners and intellect to his brother, and his natural intelligence has been cultivated by his education in France. He seems, however, to have little of the ambition or energy of his father; but he nevertheless displays an interest in the good of the country by the introduction of steam ploughs and other agricultural improvements, and of English horses for breeding purposes. His chief amusement is hunting; and he keeps some of the finest hawks in the world, which, along with very beautiful Persian greyhounds, are employed in gazelle-hunting in the Desert.

And so this family is becoming rapidly extinct; and so will, I am persuaded, die out the Turk and the Arab, as die out all nations and all races which have not the spirit that carries them on with the progress of the times. The great tide sweeps on resistless, and they cannot swim, so it

engulfs them. It is the law that, like those of the Medes and Persians, altereth not; and where a people is without energy, self-reliance, courage, and the desire to improve; without faith, affection, and morality; where its God is a being who pursues his own mysterious way, refusing to man the exercise of his free will, or any influence in the course of his own or of the world's fate,—that people, having become worse than useless, a burden and an encumbrance on the face of the earth, it must and will be removed most assuredly.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ALEXANDRIAN FÊTE.

On the Road — The Arrival — The Coup-d'Œil — Levantine Belles—"Too Solid Flesh"—A Greek Matron—Lady Canning—Mr. Turveydrop in request—Home again.

SOON after my arrival in Egypt, I, with my hosts, was invited to a ball at the house of the Count —, a man of, I believe, Italian origin and great wealth, made rapidly, as Egyptian fortunes generally are. The gentleman in question was at this time living in his country house, a large square mansion painted sky-blue,—(this and ochre yellow, sometimes diversified with cornices and mouldings of pink, green, lilac, or deep blue, are favourite colours for Alexandrian and Cairene houses,)—on the banks of the Canal, and there the fête was to be given.

We started towards ten o'clock; and once out of the town found ourselves in the midst of the tide

of carriages tending in the same direction, many of them preceded by saïses carrying meschals.* The effect was strangely picturesque. Through the black night, which was pitch dark, would come dashing by the flying figure, with his swarthy face and white garments brought out strongly by the red light of the flaring meschal, scattering flakes of fire as it passed ; and again the darkness swallowed him up and he was gone, though the dancing torch and its fiery wake marked his course through the obscurity.


A night-drive out of the town is not unattended with danger, from the infamous condition of the roads and the wholly unprotected state of the borders of the Canal, owing to which several accidents have already occurred ; and from the mode of driving of the arrabagees, who have got a liberal, easy sort of fashion of giving their horses the run of the middle and both sides of the road, and who, in return, claim neither as a right when meeting or passing other carriages, but leave it to Allah to decide whether a collision shall or shall not result. Some of the Alexandrians added to

* A sort of torch, consisting of an iron basket filled with some resinous composition, borne on the top of a pole.

these risks that of robbers, but I confess this peril appeared to me wholly imaginary, though the fear of it kept some of the guests away. I may state, however, that a large number of the invited were Greeks, with whom discretion—let us call it so—is considered by far the better part of valour.

Arrived at the gate of the garden, in the midst of which the house stands, the usual scene of confusion attendant upon any approach to a throng of carriages here awaited us. The arrabagee has no more idea of getting out of the way when mounted on his box than when tramping the streets on foot, and no blue-liveried policeman is here to compel him to do so: the dire and hopeless crush and cram and aimless excitement which ensue may be imagined.

Horses plunge, carriages crash, drivers flog, shriek, and swear, saïses dash frantically about, tugging at the heads of the fiery little Arabs, and making matters worse by scattering flames from their meschals among the press. At last, chiefly by dint of the coolness of our English coachman, we get safely landed; and one step within the precincts of the garden changes the whole scene.



The early December night is still and mild and sweet as a June night in England, and through its solemn gloom rise up the rich odours of unknown flowers. The sky-blue mansion, showing only its broad façade, its columned terrace, to which you mount by broad, easy flights of carpeted stairs, and its large lighted windows, looks like an Italian palace. On the top stand several gentlemen in ball costume and bareheaded, two of whom, though strangers to us, bow and offer us their arms, which we of course accept, and we are led by them into the vast hall, where they take off our cloaks, and where we are presented with bouquets of roses, scented-geraniums, and double jonquils. Then, repeating the bows, they return to their post. These are a sort of stewards, generally relations or intimate friends of the family, and deputed by the master of the house to perform this ceremony, which appeared to me a very graceful and courteous one, and is extended to all ladies, whether accompanied by gentlemen or not.

The reception-rooms, of which there seemed to me to be at least six or seven, were all on the ground floor, and most of them of splendid pro-

portions; the floors of scagliola, and some of the walls and ceilings rather prettily decorated. A profusion of brilliant Egyptian flowers in great vases also added much to the gaiety of the *coup d'œil*; but conspicuous among all blazed whole branches of the gorgeous pointsetias, which in the Count's garden were particularly fine.

This fête was especially interesting to me, as being composed almost entirely of the foreign society of Alexandria, and notably of the Levantine element, which English people have but few opportunities of encountering.

With the exception of Mr. Colquhoun, our Consul-general, his Secretary, and one or two others besides our own party of three, I believe there were no English present.

Having paid our *devoirs* to the mistress of the house, we were placed on a sofa at the upper end of the chief reception-room; and as dancing had hardly commenced, had time to look about us, and to note the guests, who were still flocking in, and the ladies ranged in a circle round the room. These, to my disappointment, all wore ordinary European costume; which was, in most cases, neither fresh nor in good taste, nor gracefully

worn: the only exception was in the instance of one little old lady, who sat in a bundle in the corner; in such a bundle that you could hardly tell in what fashion her dark silk dress was made, and could only distinguish that her head was covered with the silken skull-cap, bound round turban-wise with a small handkerchief, that forms the ordinary Levantine *coiffure*, though the younger women, when *en toilette*, dress their hair with elaborate complications, into which enter a quantity of natural flowers of every kind and hue.

I have been in many parts of the world. I have seen on their own ground all sorts of women, from the radiant daughters of "the Howards," to the dusky North American squaws. But such fat women, and so many of them, I never saw in any land as those Levantine ladies there assembled. Talk of Turkish women, fattened like crammed turkeys;—they are slim to these. The harems boast much flesh; you see among their narrow precincts many dames *bien nourries*; you find plump faces, redundant busts, ill-contained by the loose garment that covers them. Sturdy legs and pudsy hands abound. But what is all this beside the vast proportions of those "fat-fleshed" fair

ones? it is Pharaoh's dream,—the lean kine and the fat kine.

While girls are yet in their teens the doom begins to fall on them. The commencement is far from objectionable. It is agreeable to see well-rounded arms and shoulders you are "tempted to pat" at the so often skinny ages of fifteen and sixteen.

These are almost always accompanied by—item, a pair of long dark almond eyes "set with *very* dirty fingers;" eyes that alternately flash and languish, at the owner's command, and that are shaded by straight, thick, black brows: not unfrequently adopting the doubtful "charm of married brows." By—item, dense *heaps* of coarse, black, wavy hair, that lie on their heads and on the back of their necks in the massive way you see depicted in old Egyptian paintings; and sometimes, though very rarely, you see fine complexions.

So far so good; except that these damsels look like comely matrons verging on thirty, or "fine girls" who have flirted through some ten or twelve seasons, and having as yet found none of the first-class matches quite sufficiently appreciative of their charms, are becoming more than condescending, even encouraging, to the second.

But now turn we to the mothers. We have just been, rather admiring that plump, short-necked damsel, with the bright eyes and rosy cheeks and dimpling smiles, looking like a cherubim *prolonged*.

There is her mother sitting opposite; "look on this picture and on that," and see the blossom whose bud we have just been contemplating.

She can hardly be forty, and her smooth face yet bears traces of considerable comeliness. But the bright dark eyes are imbedded, the nose is sunk, the smiling mouth is buried in swelling flesh; of neck there is no symptom; the head rests behind on a *hump* of fat, in front on a protuberance like the crop of a pouter pigeon. Her arms—ye gods and little fishes! what fillets of veal you might make by dividing each in three or four pieces. Poor soul! is it not pitiful? "Methinks 'tis wondrous pitiful!" Yet she does not seem to mind it: there she sits, smiling benignly, the picture of serene contentment; and except that the frequent exercise of her fan hints that the "too solid flesh" *does* manifest a disposition to "melt," even in the pleasant and by no means high temperature of the spacious, airy,

and not over-crowded rooms, her condition seems in nowise distressful to her.

As I do not dance I walked about the rooms with Mr. R— and Mr. Colquhoun, and from him I then heard the yet unannounced news of the mournful termination of Lady Canning's career. I did not know her; yet knowing some who loved her,—knowing noble traits of her life in that time of awful trouble and tremendous responsibility in the land she was about to quit for the joys of her English home,—remembering in days gone by that sweet and gracious beauty,—thinking of the pang this dreary news would bring among some other English homes,—I felt more saddened than one is wont to feel at news of a stranger's death; and many times there came across me visions of the face that would never more be seen by the many who were still joyously expecting to see it, and who knew not, as I did, that their hope would never be fulfilled on this side the grave.

There was no regular supper; but fruits, cakes, ices, and other refreshments, abundantly intermingled with flowers, were laid out in one of the rooms. A few of the men wore the

Eastern costume, but they were quite the exception.

Some of the young Greeks—who showed none of the tendency to obesity so strongly developed among the women, but were generally spare, oval-faced, and olive-complexioned, and had the same heads of compact, black, frizzy hair displayed by their wives and sisters—seemed to dance rather well, and bear themselves correctly. Not so with many of the damsels. I saw not a few convert the sober monotony of the uninteresting quadrille into a very jolly game, as nearly approaching a romp as the presence of some of the graver elements would allow. How they skipped, and giggled, and swung hands, and beckoned, and gambolled, till their already by no means fresh toilettes became mere *chiffons*, and the flowers tumbled out of their hair, it boots not now to tell. Suffice it to say that the presence of Mr. Turveydrop, with a few hints from that accomplished reflection of the First Gentleman in Europe in the matter of deportment, would have been remarkaby *à propos*.

Soon after twelve the rooms began to thin a little, and we left about half past, much amused

with the evening's entertainment; albeit, I confess, with, on my part at least, somewhat a surfeit of the monotony of black hair, black eyes, and olive tints, and a longing for the soft, pearly whites, the bright or delicate roses, the blue. sweet eyes, and the fair or red-brown tresses so rarely seen but in the sister islands of these our northern seas.

CHAPTER VII.

DOMESTIC ZOOLOGY.

Camels—The Camel's Load—The Camel in Anger—Dromedaries—Horses—Chariot Races—Mules and Asses—Donkeys—The Rachwan—Oxen, Buffaloes, &c.—Goats, Sheep, &c.—Nightly Noises—Four-horned Sheep—Jerboas.

ONE of the things that particularly strikes a new-comer to Egypt is the number and variety of domestic animals he sees. Camels—slow, ungainly, impassive-looking, with their strange shape and gait, and their eyes so oddly set, the ball slanting upwards and outwards, the upper half shaded by the deep lid, so that as the beast proceeds with his muzzle straight out, instead of downwards, it can yet see what passes on the ground below him, and have the sight protected from the vertical sun-glare. Horses, nearly all Arabs, small, fiery, and active. Donkeys, brisk, shapely, and quite a different animal from the

slow "Neddy" of low repute. Mules in great variety; ugly, iron-gray buffaloes; handsome, Juno-eyed oxen; hideous goats, with pendant ears; sheep, nearly as ugly; dogs by the hundred; and a sprinkling of cats. Fowls abound, and there are ducks, geese, and turkeys, but these are less numerous.

All these animals, be it understood, remain within the town or in its suburbs, with the exception of a few months of the year, when some of the horses, asses, mules, and horned cattle are put out to *berseem*, generally for a month or six weeks at a time, where they are tethered, and whence they often return lame in consequence.

For pasture, properly speaking, there is none, and the sheep and goats live on what they can pick up on the banks of the fortifications, or by the roadsides, herded by Arab children. But this resource only lasts while the grass that the winter rains have caused to spring lasts; how they live when this is eaten up, sun-dried and dust-worn, I know not, for hay there is none, and the straw of the barley is but a few inches long and chiefly kept for horses.

Camels are animals whose moral peculiarities

are so differently represented by travellers, that I took every opportunity of studying their characteristics. They are patience itself; say the camelists, gentle, faithful, tractable, attached, and obedient to their masters; animals, in a word, endowed with all qualities and all virtues, independent of their great strength, their powers of endurance, and their unspeakable utility. Vicious beasts they are, say the anti-camelists; without intelligence, without attachment, lazy, treacherous, uncertain; they are made for a particular sort of work, and it would be hard if, with all their evil qualities, they could not do that tolerably. But except for travelling in the desert, and carrying heavy loads on that flat, soft ground, they are useless; you'll never make anything of a camel, do what you will with him. So, as I have said, I studied the camel, as far as my opportunities, which were not very numerous, would permit, and he seemed to me to be marvellously patient up to a certain point; dull, harmless, except when irritated; averse to motion (which may, in a considerable degree, explain his patience), and, all things considered, an ugly, useful, uninteresting beast.

There were moments, however, when one's feelings of indifference gave way at the sight of his sufferings or of his anger; for the one was very touching, the other very terrible.

He carries his burdens,—often extremely galling and unwieldy ones, such as great stones for building,—in rope network slung on either side his hump; and sometimes he has to bear such loads as planks and beams of great length, fastened to these and running parallel with his body, often piled up in the middle, so that as he moves with his awkward stride, these pitch up and down, alternately hitting his bent head and his lean croup in a really distressing manner.

Kneeling to receive his burden, he remains quietly ruminating, and making neither complaint nor resistance till he feels, as is often the case, the load getting heavier than he is prepared to bear. Then he turns his flexible neck, contemplates it sadly, and sighs. If no notice be taken of this meek remonstrance, he utters groans most dreary to hear; and finally, if the load becomes too galling, his temper gets roused, and he roars terrifically, and is, in this state, dangerous to approach.


I remember that within a few paces of the house we occupied a new one was in the course of erection, nearly all the materials of which were brought on the backs of camels. The poor beasts rarely complained at their loads of bricks and stones, but the timber came hard upon them. As they knelt down, first bringing the fore quarters to the ground, then the hind, the beams and planks of course tilted so much as to wrench their bodies and hit their heads and croups really severe blows, and then their savage roarings were more terrible than those of any lion or tiger I have ever heard. Sometimes, too, taught by experience, they refused to kneel to be unloaded, and battles ensued with their drivers in which you felt uneasy as to the issue. Their bite is tremendous, as from the size and strength of jaws and teeth they crush the bones without difficulty, and occasionally the sight of a muzzle on a camel gives a hint of his disposition; in general, though, their only headgear is a simple halter, for the Egyptian camel's nose is never ringed, and he is guided by a stick.

The dromedary is to the camel what the race-horse is to the cart-horse, and he alone is ridden by

any one above the rank of the fellah, who mounts his camel as Hodge mounts Dobbin, because it is easier—or so *he* thinks—to have Dobbin's legs carry him than to use his own. The pace of the dromedary, I am told, is delightfully easy, and very swift; while the movement of the camel seems to threaten the rider with dislocation in every limb, though he rarely moves out of his slow walk, dragging forward his hind and fore-leg on the same side.

Some of the little desert camels occasionally came into Cairo and Alexandria. They are considerably smaller than the ordinary camel; have pale fawn-coloured woolly coats, pretty eyes, and are altogether less ugly than their more civilized compeers.

I am told that in some parts of Upper Egypt there are two-humped camels; and I have heard long discussions, *not* in Egypt, as to whether or no these were the camel proper or the dromedary proper, and if this plurality of humps were not the distinctive mark of one or the other race. *In* Egypt, however, this question is set aside, and the double-humped camel is merely regarded as a different variety from either of the two others.



Among the horses, the variety is infinitely less than with us. Nearly every Arab, from the thoroughbred you ride to the poor little beast that draws the fellah's overladen truck, has the same characteristics; few are *very* beautiful, nearly all have *some* beauty and appearance of race and breeding.

Very rarely indeed do they reach fifteen hands, and are seldom more than fourteen one or two. They have beautiful heads and eyes, necks commonly too short, and consequently wanting in flexibility; low and somewhat heavy shoulders, good carcasses, excellent hind quarters, and fine, clean, shapely limbs. But they have no action whatever, and unless you have been at much pains to teach them to trot, no paces but a walk and a gallop; they are hot and fidgety, and are commonly broken and ridden with a bit so severe that the irritation of this, added to their natural impatience, keeps them in a constant state of fret; and they go dancing about with their heads thrown back, and their ears in the rider's face in a most uncomfortable fashion, and so near the ground, from their straight heavy shoulder, that they often trip and stumble, but rarely fall: al-

together they are unsatisfactory animals to ride, though proper breaking and teaching go far to improve them. In travel, however, their good qualities come forth. They become steady and tractable; their powers of endurance, and, considering their size, their strength, are considerably greater than those of almost any European horses. They eat less, and inferior food keeps them in good condition; and though they are apt to fight a good deal among themselves, they rarely show vice, or even horseplay to human beings, frequently allowing children to go about among their legs, without putting back an ear.

It is at once marvellous and deplorable to see what these elegant-looking creatures in the hands of fellahs are compelled to do. Ahmet or Mahommed tackles his slight-limbed, fine-headed creature, with a few ropes and thongs, to his low, long, heavy four-wheeled truck. He then piles thereon a load that would be no light one for a dray-horse, and having done so, mounts himself, and applies the whip vigorously, knowing that nothing but starting with a jerk and a tremendous pull will get the vehicle into motion. The load once started the poor willing little beast, with

straining muscles, keeps it going till a hole in the road brings him to a standstill. Then the whip comes into play again, and so he gets through his day's work as best he may. But his burden delivered his trials are not over. His master stands on the empty truck, and holding on by the reins flogs him into a gallop, and thus gains his home.

Setting aside the fatigue of this homeward course to the horse, the appearance thereof is picturesque in the utmost degree. I have seen two or three trucks, apparently racing, abreast or nearly so. Under the glowing evening sky they go along, one or two blood-like little horses, unencumbered with any harness beyond collar, traces and reins, attached to each cart, galloping with flying manes and tails, while behind stands the finely-built Arab, guiding them in the attitude of an Olympian charioteer, his white or dark blue garments fluttering round his lithe form, his nervous arms and legs bare and shapely.


Horses were wonderfully cheap in Alexandria when I was there, which I was told was partly owing to the sale of a large number of European horses that had been imported by the Pacha for a

body of cavalry lately disbanded. Twenty pound was rather a high price for a horse, unless really remarkable for goodness, beauty, or breeding; from ten to fifteen was a common average, and I have seen very decent horses sold as low as seven or eight.

Mules are a good deal used for different purposes. The common ones, which are generally frightfully ugly—a fact I never could account for, seeing the amount of beauty displayed in a more or less degree by nearly all the horses and asses—are much employed in heavy draught, and the handsome and better-bred ones are used to draw the carriages of the ladies of the harems when they go out, and are often ridden by the Turks and the eunuchs in the employ of great men, or in charge of their harems.

But perhaps the most important of all the beasts of burden, from their number and universal employment and utility, as well as from their valuable qualities, are the asses.

The Egyptian ass has little in common with our dull, clumsy, slow-paced donkey. He is a brisk, lively, and often very handsome animal; his eye is bright, his ears erect, his skin sleek, his legs



fine and clean : he is very strong and very willing ; he walks faster than most horses, he trots smoothly and evenly, and when he has learnt the *rachwan*, he is a delightful *monture*. A high-bred donkey, with his trappings, is an animal no gentleman or lady in Egypt disdains to ride, and many of these fetch as high a price as fifty or sixty pounds. They are generally black, white, or a bright grey, and so spirited that the difficulty is to hold them. The trappings consist of a very comfortable saddle of bright coloured and padded woollen stuff, with a sort of hump covered with red leather, which, for a woman, answers the purpose of a pommel, as the right knee can be put over it. On this is spread a donkey-cloth of scarlet or purple, fringed at either end with gold, and a scarlet bridle, with various decorations and gold tassels and fringes completes the *harnachement*. Even the street-donkeys, the general substitute for cabs, partake in some degree of the qualities I have described, and starved and over-worked as they are, are often very comely beasts and pleasant to ride. They all have a peculiarity which I am told is one of the secrets of their remarkable strength. The vertebra, instead of sinking in the

middle, as with horses, rises, so that the centre of the back is the highest part.

Nearly all the high-bred asses, mules, and a few horses are taught the *rachwan*—a pace delightful to the rider, but, from the process of teaching, cruel to the animal. The beast, when young, is put into the hands of an experienced trainer: there is in Alexandria a specially noted one, Ahmet, better known, I cannot say why, as Allen, a tall, stately Arab, always attired in spotless robes, scarlet slippers, and snowy turban, who speaks English fluently, and who is employed in all horse-dealing affairs by Europeans.

I will exemplify the mode of education by describing the training of a very handsome grey mule he was breaking in, and used to ride to and fro in the space before our house, to display to us.

The animal's head is borne up very tight, his fore-legs are tied together, so that he can only separate them a little, and one hind and one fore-leg are tethered to each other. He is led about for some time until he can walk with tolerable ease under these trying circumstances, then mounted and ridden faster and faster by degrees, until at

last the low, smooth shuffle he is forced to adopt becomes his habitual pace, and when urged beyond a walk he never goes at any other. The extraordinary swiftness and smoothness with which Allen used to glide by on his mule was something marvellous to behold, as well as the perfect command the animal was under. But the forced and rapid gait, and the unnatural position of the head, with the muzzle straight out, and the neck held almost against the rider's chest, must have been intensely fatiguing to the poor creature.

The oxen, which come chiefly from Upper Egypt, are large and very handsome. They are generally of a reddish dun or fawn colour, with heads and legs of a lighter shade, the heads small and beautifully-shaped, and the eyes, with black or dark brown around them, singularly large, mild and fine. They are very strong and patient, and are used in agriculture and for beef.

Buffaloes are more numerous and less valuable. They are hideous, shaggy, dirty-looking beasts; the males are chiefly employed in heavy draught ploughing, and at the water-wheel, and the cows for milk, but goat's milk is generally preferred.

These latter animals rival the buffaloes in ugli-

ness. They are meagre, short-haired beasts, with ewe-necks, extremely Roman noses, long flopping ears, which hang down and turn outward at the points, and the she-goats have immense udders, which are generally tied up in bags strapped over their loins, to prevent the kids taking the milk. They are of various colours, but most commonly liver-coloured or spotted; and their hoofs, from the soft, sandy soil, which offers no resistance to the hard horn meant by nature for contact with rocky ground, grow out and turn up in the most fantastic shapes. The sheep much resemble the goats, with which they generally herd indiscriminately; but, ugly and scantily fed as they are, the mutton, though small and lean, is very fine-grained and delicate. Pigs are not very numerous. They are superior to the common continental pig, but quite inferior to the British grunter.

As to the dogs, their name is Legion, and they partake considerably of the nature of that body of spirits so self-styled in Scripture. The breed, such as it is, keeps very unmixed. Everywhere you see the rough fawn or whitish coat, the bushy tail, the prick ear, the mistrustful eye, the slouching gait. These animals herd together in packs,

and the strongest dog of the pack, takes possession of a certain portion or quarter of the town, where, attended by his subordinates, he holds sway. But his dominion is by no means secure or undisputed.

Often at night the canine king of a neighbouring district leads on his followers to invade his rival's territories, and woe to the human inhabitants of these quarters. Night after night—for these internecine combats are often of long duration—is their rest utterly destroyed by the barking, yellings, and howlings of these creatures, and many and many a time have I laid by stocks of ammunition in the shape of stones and brickbats, to hurl at the combatants from my window. But I must confess the doing so acted rather as a relief to my exasperated feelings than as any check on their noise, for the warfare went on as merrily as ever. Between the barking of dogs, the braying of asses, and the crowing of cocks, which here sing out lustily at all hours of the night and day, Alexandria is by far the noisiest, and the most offensively noisy capital, in which I ever slept or rather attempted to sleep, for there

were many nights when I could hardly get beyond the attempt.

There is, I am told, a remarkably fine breed of sheep in Upper Egypt; and I have seen one or two pretty good specimens of the race at Alexandria. Some of the rams have four horns, two curling in the ordinary way, the other two bending backwards in a single curve.

Mice, I suppose, may rank among domestic animals; they, at all events, would no doubt class themselves under that head. They are very numerous, larger than ours, and their hair of a light grey, so coarse that it stands out like bristles. They have a curious fashion of carrying their food about with them. Bird-seed, barley, &c., will be found all over houses in the folds of curtains, behind pieces of furniture, and even on the highest shelves of book-cases, closets, &c. Of rats, happily, I saw or heard nothing.

The pretty little jerboas, whose holes abound in the desert about Alexandria, easily become domesticated, (as lady-companions and house-keepers now describe themselves in advertisements to be,) and make playful and familiar pets.


But their intense thriftiness in the matter of furnishing their houses for the winter is destructive to all woollen stuffs ; and carpets, curtains, blankets, cloth garments of every description, fall sacrifices to this housewifely propensity.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARAB IN LIFE AND DEATH.

Acrobats—Their Audience—The Dead Fellah—A Fellah Funeral—Arab Cemetery—Tombs of Sheiks, &c.—Unmarked Tombs—Murder—Impunity of Crime.

IN the streets of Alexandria acrobatic performances are of frequent occurrence. They are seldom very remarkable for skill or difficulty; but the exquisite lithe grace, and in general the symmetry of the performers, and the picturesque crowds they call together, make them interesting to a stranger. Often the monotonous sound of the *tarabooka*, a little drum which is used on a great variety of occasions, and of a shrill and almost equally monotonous pipe, drew me to the balcony. A circle was formed, in the midst of which the acrobats went through nearly the same tricks we are accustomed to witness in our streets or at



country fairs ; but the slight, finely-formed bodies and limbs had a catlike ease and suppleness quite peculiar to themselves : there was a naturalness in their movements, that gave you the idea that when they climbed on each other's heads and shoulders, and twined themselves together, and especially when the uppermost ones "swarmed," as sailors say, down the bodies of their comrades to the ground, they were going through a series of movements in which they were as much at home as when walking the streets.

Soon the crowd would swell around them. Here a group of fellahs—donkey-boys and idlers—grinned and chattered. The *bouwabs* or porters of the neighbouring houses, who are generally Nubians, with an occasional *soffraee*, whose master or mistress was out, and two or three *saises*, paused to look on in a sort of half-contemptuous manner. Here and there a burly Turk, with a calm smile on his generally good-natured, sly face, elbowed a hollow-chested, sallow Levantine. The criers of "sea-fleas"—great plump prawns, bright as finest pink coral, of *lebbèn*—curdled milk, and of *portoqan*—oranges, became for the moment silent. Conspicuous for noise, and a sort of half-

jolly, half-contemptuous mirth, stood in the front row of spectators a knot of English man-o'-war's men ; a few Europeans stopped an instant on their way, while on the skirts of the crowd, fluttered, with timid curiosity, two or three Arab women, not daring to form a part of the throng, but striving to get occasionally a furtive peep where the circle was thinnest. This crowd not being by any means a paying one, the performers generally reaped their harvest from the windows and balconies of the surrounding houses, where were often grouped as many nationalities as in the street below. Dancers also—always men—snake-charmers, and musicians are tolerably numerous.

One day I was drawn to the windows that looked on the group of Arab huts I have already described by a series of shrill, prolonged, tremulous cries proceeding therefrom, and learning that in one of them a man lay dead, and that the funeral rites were in progress, I stationed myself to observe what I could ; such information as I failed thus to obtain being supplied by my friend's maid, who had been some time in Egypt, and had made very good use of her opportunities to study the place and the people.

Although these Arabs were of the lowest class, and evidently very poor, and that the deceased was no relation to any of them, but an outcast taken among them and mainly supported by their charity, the ceremonies attendant on his funeral were observed with the strictest attention, and the voices I had heard were those of mourners *hired* for the occasion.

I give the substance of what I saw and heard, and what was told me relative to these ceremonies, together, in order to avoid confusion.

The body being washed and laid out, it is closely and carefully swathed from head to foot—each limb, each finger and toe separately—with long strips of very coarse open cotton cloth, stiffened with a white glaze, and having stamped on it verses of the Koran (pronounced *Korawn*).

Various male friends and relations of the defunct assemble, some on foot, some on donkeys, and after the exchange of solemn salutations, sit down on the ground without the hut, and smoke for hours, in a silence seldom broken. Meanwhile the mourners ply their trade. An old woman leads with a dismal solo, in which she half-

recites, half-chants the virtues, deeds, and qualities, real or imaginary, of the deceased, and the grief of those he leaves behind, every now and then interrupting her recital with a conventional sound, supposed to represent a sudden outburst of sobbing and weeping, and at intervals the other mourners join in a chorus of shrill cries.

What the rest of the in-door ceremonies may be I could not discover; but there was much going to and fro among the women, the men remaining nearly passive, and smoking as if their lives depended on the consumption of so much tobacco within a given time.

All the morning this went on with little interruption or variety; and at last the body was brought out uncoffined, laid on the bier, which was a mere hand-barrow of unpainted wood standing on four legs, and being carefully covered and comfortably tucked up under an old shawl, with a green flag fastened at the head, it was carried off by two men, followed by a small procession, among whom were the shrill mourners, to be interred in the vast burial-ground without the city, over which the column of Diocletian, called, no one seems to know why, Pompey's

Pillar, sends up from the mound on which it stands its stately and beautiful shaft.

Not many days after I visited a portion of this great field of the dead, which covers some acres of ground, and which has the same curiously dilapidated appearance that marks everything within and without the city. In this case the crumbling of many of the tombs, and the generally distorted appearance of the upright stones, no doubt proceeds from the greater portion of the ground being undermined by the foundations of ancient Alexandria; but here also, as elsewhere, you see walls and mosques commenced and never completed. This cemetery is, notwithstanding its extent, crammed as full as many of the graveyards whose over-gorged condition has called for the exercise of sanitary reforms.

Most of the graves are of vaulted masonry, with a head and foot-stone, and some are painted in a sort of fresco with set patterns in bright reds, blues, and blacks, but in no single instance did I see any sort of indication of a name, date, or inscription.

Thickly planted among them are stunted greyish-green aloes, which are supposed to keep off the influence of demons and of the evil eye.

Here and there a small mosque is erected over the remains of some sheik, saint, or other personage whose wisdom, sanctity, or money was sufficient to procure him that distinction ; and so great is the veneration of Arabs for the memories of saints and sages, that wherever a mosque-tomb is erected to any of these, even without the precincts of a regular burial-ground, it is considered a great and precious privilege to be allowed to have a grave beneath the shadow of its walls.

Standing by Pompey's Pillar this undulating plain of tombs has, on a still day especially, a most imposing effect. On every side the graves lie white and close, bristled about by the thrifty grey aloes, which are almost the only vegetation the narrow spaces allow.

Among the Arabs none of the men's bodies are coffined—the women's, I believe, are—nor are they in any instance covered with earth, the space within the low vault of the tomb being left free. Some of the graves had been torn open, evidently by force from without, and the immediate neighbourhood of an Arab village, with its host of prowling ill-fed dogs, suggested to my mind a

horrible suspicion as to the cause of this desecration.

On Thursdays the road to the cemetery is strewn with trucks and donkeys, bearing men and a few women to visit the tombs of their deceased relatives, and here they spend a good portion of the day, wandering about or sitting by the graves they have come to visit in a sort of listless way, glad of the excuse to pass so many hours in total idleness. I am told that Europeans should not visit the cemetery on these occasions, as they risk being treated as infidel intruders, come to insult the remains of the faithful. The ground is not walled-in nor enclosed in any way, which adds to its picturesqueness.

I have often regretted that I had no opportunity of seeing it by the light of an Eastern moon: the effect must have been singularly striking; and the possibility of the imagined, though I take it by no means imaginary, episodes of the hungry, howling night-hounds would have added an element of horror to the scene very thrilling and terrible.

It is singular that with the reverence in which Mahomedans hold the graves of their dead, they

take no means to mark them ; for in a cemetery of this extent, so crowded, where the form of the tombs is so much the same, and the material and colour (except in the rare instances of the painted ones) always identical, a few years, certainly the passing of a generation, must render their identity almost impossible to discover. It may be that they have some private clue by which to recognise them ; but certainly no distinguishing mark is visible to a giaour.

The frequency of assassinations in the streets of Alexandria, and the impunity with which they are attended, are alarming and disgraceful to the highest degree. They are chiefly committed by Italians, with whom the use of the stiletto is here as common as in the worst days of misrule in their native land.

Strange to say these hideous crimes are rarely perpetrated in the night, but in the brief twilight and early darkness that follow the sunset.

One of a peculiarly brutal nature occurred while I was in Alexandria.

A clerk of one of the chief banking and mercantile houses was passing along the square between seven and eight o'clock, when his foot

struck against some object on the pavement. Bending his lantern, (all persons are required to carry a *fanoose*, a glass or paper lantern, the streets not being lighted at night,) he found it was the body of a man weltering in a pool of blood, and with the head nearly severed from the trunk.

Giving an alarm, the corpse was taken up and examined, and was found to have seven deep stabs in various parts. It was next day recognised as the body of a young Greek, who kept a small cook-shop in or near the square.

Some time previously a robbery had been committed in the adjoining house, and his testimony went far to criminate certain Italians of bad repute resident in Alexandria. These men, or their friends, had, it appeared, lain in wait for the unhappy young man, stabbed him at a short distance from his own door; and at that hour, in the heart of the most public part of the city, they had followed their victim nearly the whole length of the square, stabbing him till he fell from loss of blood, and then nearly severing his head from his body, unmolested and undisturbed in their bloody career. A good deal of excitement attended the event at the time, and the men were arrested, but

what form of trial they went through, and when and how they were punished, or if punished at all, no one, after a little interval, seemed to know or care. The common infliction for the worst crimes is banishment—to Malta! whence the robber or assassin may return with impunity *quand bon lui semble*.

The English and one or two other consuls were endeavouring to establish a more stringent set of rules for the repression of crime; but when I came away the passive resistance of Orientalism to all innovations had yet failed to receive any impression.

CHAPTER IX.

ANCIENT ALEXANDRIA.

The Ride—The Doctor's Donkey—The Route—The Arrival
—The Necropolis—A Greek Beauty—Beautiful Sarcophagus—The Coup-d'Œil—Roman Remains—Modern Alexandria.

AT Alexandria, very near the house my hosts occupied, lived a French physician, an agreeable and very intelligent man, who held an important place in the Institut Egyptien, an institution the nature and object of which I confess to be unacquainted with. Learned, also, in antiquities was Dr. S—, and most evenings, when his day's work was done, might his pale clever face and his French curly-brimmed hat, surmounting his huge, white massive-headed donkey, be seen crossing the patch of desert between the city and the ruins of ancient

Alexandria, Greek and Roman, that border the coast in the direction of Ramlegh.

Very precious relics had he collected in his solitary excursions, especially as the fellahs employed in excavations knew where to apply for a certain purchaser of whatever objects of value or interest they might find, and generally gave him the choice and the refusal of their *trouvailles*. He had also a large collection of antique skulls, taken from the vast Necropolis, which forms an important portion of the Greek remains of the great city—skulls in a more or less perfect condition, but in general bearing the pure Caucasian type, often in its highest development.

I was extremely anxious to visit at leisure this supereminently classic ground—a ride on horseback over which had one day strongly stimulated my interest—and knowing how admirable a cicerone would be found in Dr. S—, I made interest with him to take me there.

Some other of our friends agreed to join the party; and one fine afternoon we started, a cavalcade of five or six on donkeys, headed by the doctor on his milk-white asinine charger, and attended by three or four Arab donkey-boys,

prodding the beasts behind to keep them at the shuffling trot which is their usual pace.

Soon we were out of the city, and striking across the desert sands towards our destination.

The weather was delicious, neither hot nor cold; the sea-breeze swept athwart the broad open space, bringing a sense of refreshing and invigoration delightful to feel; we were all in gay spirits, and the small incidents and accidents of the route, inseparable from the conduct of a troop of donkeys, for the most part carrying riders not much accustomed to such a mode of locomotion, only formed fresh food for

“Jest and youthful jollity.”

My donkey, borrowed from an acquaintance, was a very handsome, well-bred and well-trained beast, with housings of a gorgeous description, so that I got on smoothly enough; but some others of the party were less fortunate. It seemed that the doctor's ass, generally accustomed to go alone, was apt, when in the company of his fellows, to be seized with hostile emotions towards them, on which occasions, as the brute was as strong as an elephant and as dogged as a mule, no means of securing peace were to be found, but in diverting

his attention and expending his energies by a brief gallop.

Accordingly, very often, in the midst of a most interesting conversation, the doctor, who was always on the *qui vive* for the first symptom of such manifestations, would suddenly strike his spurs into the beast's sides, administer a sounding blow of his cane on its head, and shoot ahead into the desert at full gallop, perform a series of wheels, curvets, and meanderings, then return, and without remark or comment, resume the thread of his discourse exactly where it had been broken.

Presently we came to the bank of a steep ravine: at the bottom flowed a green and sluggish stream, most untempting to sight and smell, and on the opposite shore rose an Arab village, with its mud huts, dogs, goats, fowls, and half-naked children, and its perpetual atmosphere of peat smoke, by far the most savoury and wholesome of the odours in which those dens are rich.

Along the side of this ravine, by a narrow foot-path wholly unprotected and of steep descent, lay our way.

Some of the party, mistrustful of their donkey's fore-legs, and not relishing the notion of a roll

into the slimy current below—an event which a false step would render almost inevitable—dismounted; but the doctor, confident that here, at least, his *monture* was unimpeachable, boldly led the way, and I and one or two others followed, still mounted, down to where a rude bridge crossed the water, and up a yet steeper ascent leading to the top of the other bank, where we waited till rejoined by the walkers. Of course there came the usual salutations of barks, snarls, and howls from the troop of village dogs that had followed our course along their bank of the stream, for the sole satisfaction of displaying these marks of ferocity—a ferocity so alloyed with the usual cowardice that of the stones with which we returned their greetings, only one went far enough to reach its aim, and sent the beast off yelping with his tail between his legs. A few children, too, arrived with the usual “meskeen, ya sit, backsheesh, backsheesh!”—I am poor, O lady, a gift!

The appeals, however, were unheeded; and we proceeded over the sands, bound firm and close by a thin, scattered herbage, and by one or two sorts of creeping plants lying close to the soil, clasping it with fibrous fingers, and displaying little yellow

and purple tufty blossoms, still we reached the remains—very distinctly visible by its flint borders—of the ancient Roman road leading from the coast inland. A few paces further on we reached the excavations which are laying bare the site of the great city, the rival of Rome, with her temples and her palaces, and her vast Necropolis, where, by a strange contradiction, the resting-places and the remains of the dead are in a far more perfect and recognisable condition than the most magnificent dwellings and resorts of the living. And this was ancient Alexandria!

A great mound of sand cut in parts into pits and hollows, with narrow, perilous paths between them, by Arab fellahs in the hope of finding buried treasures, or to take the fragments of marble—white, green, and grey—the blocks of granite and red porphyry, the portions of fluted columns, the capitals of acanthus-crowned pillars, to build their miserable huts, or burn for lime.

At the mouth of a newly-opened tomb we dismounted, and looking in, found it contained the uncoffined remains of two bodies. I very much wished to bring away the skulls, which, as they

lay, seemed quite perfect, but on being taken out they crumbled to pieces in our hands.

Before I left Alexandria, however, Dr. S— made up for my disappointment in this matter by giving me one he had found in the Necropolis in perfect preservation, except for the usual absence of the lower jaw. The shape is singularly beautiful and finely organized. It is small, and such teeth as remain are white and perfectly sound, leading to the conclusion that it is the skull of a woman, quite young, yet arrived at early womanhood from the fact that one of the wisdom teeth is cut, and the other just pierces the bone of the gum. In addition to the beautifully balanced form of the skull, the shape of the eye-orbits, the shortness of the upper lip, and the general delicacy of the moulding of even the bones of the face are suggestive of loveliness; and as the white, smooth, softly-rounded cranium of my Greek beauty, as I am persuaded she was, reposes on a shelf in my sanctum between the skulls of a man of these days of fair ordinary organization, and of an idiot, frontless and hideous, one sees, not without surprise, the utter folly of the old saw that beauty is only skin-deep.

All around were tombs; some half-open, and perfectly preserving their shape, and even the firm, unbroken texture of their interior walls; some fallen in, some filled and covered with the sand, bones, and fragments of granite and stone dug out in excavating.

The Arabs have a great objection to touching the remains of the dead, by which, being unclean, they are defiled, and when they come upon them, they either leave them lying in the tombs, or dig them into the sand with all expedition.

Lying in one of the pits was a splendid granite sarcophagus, very large and deep, quite intact, and with all its edges and the carvings on its sides as fresh and sharp as if the chisel had but recently been employed on them. How I longed to possess that wonderful coffin! What barbarism it seemed to leave it there, knowing that almost infallibly its fate would be to be chopped up, and its fragments embedded in mud for the walls of a hut no better than a pig-sty, or burnt into lime. Perhaps its great size and hardness (certainly not its interest or beauty) may preserve it from Arab greed till some one with my desire, and with something very far beyond my means, may

secure it and place it in a collection, public or private.

Leaving the hollows, we, carefully threading our way, passed in single file along the crumbling paths that intersect them, and reached the highest part of the mound, beneath which still lies buried the greater part of this portion of the Greek capital. On the brink of one of the deepest excavations we paused to look around. Below, in tiers, along the wall-like side of the pit, yawned the niches where were deposited the skeletons of old Hellenes, the very forms of whose white, crumbling skulls showed how perfect had been the type of the race that served as models for the works their own hands have transmitted to us.

Two thousand years—upwards of two thousand years ago—lived those men and women whose bones we now looked on and handled! Two thousand years!

Around us, spurned by the feet of asses, lay portions of marble pavements, pearl-gray, delicately veined, carved into radiated patterns, smooth and polished; acanthus leaves, white and of glistening grain, each leaflet rough and sharp, struck out boldly by an artistic hand, whose chisel-marks

were still clear and crisp ; pieces of red porphyry, white-speckled, presenting here a smooth and still slightly-polished surface, there a rougher side to which yet adhered portions of the cement that had united it to its sister-block in the inner wall, probably of a palace.

And beyond all, the yet older, the unchanged and unchanging sea, its dark waters moaning on a low, rock-scattered coast, beneath a heavy, lowering purple sky, streaked here and there with the lurid red of a sun that had set in anger.

I bore away specimens of all the fragments I have described, and of some others as well, and they now remind me, seldom without a sigh, of that wondrous evening in the dead and buried city, whose age it is difficult to realize as you gaze on some of its relics.

Some of the party being fatigued, proceeded the shortest way home ; but Dr. S— having mentioned some curious Roman remains along the coast, which there would just be light enough left to see, the rest of us decided on taking that route.

The beach here is narrow, covered with ledges of sharp rocks difficult to pick one's way among, and bounded landward by frowning, rugged, dark

cliffs, and in certain places by giant fragments of Roman masonry, some standing, some fallen, but holding together in vast blocks, as though nothing less than the crack of doom could crumble them.

These are chiefly the ruins of baths; and the remains of the passage from the buildings down to the water is still visible, and, faintly gleaming through the waves, may be seen the white marble pavement whereon the luxurious bathers trod.

And now we had seen all, and the rapid twilight was merging into darkness, and quite silent we wended our way homeward by the moaning sea. Suddenly a scarlet flash rent the blackening horizon, and a low sullen reverberation came across the sea. It was the evening-gun, firing from the fort built out from the entrance of the harbour. We were amid civilization again—will the sound of the cannon be considered as emblematic of civilization at the end of a third thousand of years?—and a climb up a rapid bank, a short ride across a patch of desert, and we were once more in the streets of modern Alexandria, with its new ruins, its dilapidated dwellings, its dogs and its dirt.

On my return I was tempted to “do into verse”

the scene I had just witnessed. I give the result to my readers.

THE GRAVE OF A CITY.

A tract of Egyptian desert sand
Sweeping in undulating swells,
A low sea-beach without pebbles or shells,
Patches of meagre sun-burnt grasses,
Through which the sea-wind whirrs as it passes
Across the desolate strand.—
Fragments of marble, grey and white,
Basalt like iron and black as night ;
Rich red porphyry and verd-antique,
And here and there the skull of a Greek
That crumbles to dust in your hand.—
For when a fellah has need of stones
To make his miserable den,
He goes and robs the buried men ;
And in the great Necropolis
You come here and there on a deep abyss,
In whose sides are many a broken tomb ;
And if you peer into the inner gloom,
You may see these dead men's bones.—
Beneath a sandy shell-less shore
Lies scattered with fragments of masonry,
And marble pavements the Romans of yore
Spread out to make a dainty floor
For their baths in the tideless sea.—
Like a dolphin in the throes of death,
Those Mediterranean waters lie,
Dyed with violet, green, and blue,
Gold, and amber, and every hue,
By the angry evening sky.—

Down from the lowering purple cloud,
Suddenly drops the scarlet sun ;
And a scarlet flash from the evening gun,
And a burst of sluggish smoke snow-white,
And a thunder sullen and loud,
Come over the sea, and the day dies down
To his grave in the wave with an angry frown ;
And I wander home through the night.

Alexandria, 1862.

the scene I had just witnessed. I give the result to my readers.

THE GRAVE OF A CITY.

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Sweeping in undulating swells,
A low sea-beach without pebbles or shells,
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Alexandria, 1862.

the concoction of the scheme, and Italian hands in the execution.

Your Arab is a terribly bungling robber ; Fagin would have dismissed him as a hopeless " subject " after the first trial. Some Arabs managed to get into a house in Cairo ; they wandered about in search of something to rob, found they did not know the right way to go about it, went out and regaled themselves with shaddocks in the garden, and then leisurely scrambled over the wall and got away.

An Arab will often fleece you if you will let him ; but if you won't, and especially when you appeal to his feelings by the usual complimentary epithets of pig and dog, he will give in to any extent, and I regret to say, is often, in his turn, kept out of his reasonable dues by some sharp " Brown," as poor Albert Smith used to denominate your travelling Englishman of the—Brown, in short—class. I remember once, at the door of Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo, seeing the return of a Brown and Brownness from Shoubra, a distance of some three miles, I should think. They had performed the trip on donkeys, had gone over the palace and gardens, and ridden back to their

dinners; and on dismounting Brown presented the donkey-boy with—sixpence! Not sixpence *pour boire*—not sixpence "for himself,"—but sixpence for the hire of two donkeys and their driver, during an excursion of some three or four hours! And Brown stood to his offer like a man; and, utterly deaf to the remonstrances of the lad—who, holding up the sixpence, shrilly proclaimed his wrongs—marched proudly erect into the hotel, in the insolent insular way Brown is so terribly given to assume when he sets foot on foreign soil.

Oh Brown, Brown! why will you persist in making the name of Englishman ridiculous and detested among those who rarely see any but the Brown specimens of the race? Why will you be bullying and defiant, and contemptuous, and utterly impossible to please or satisfy? Why will you thrust your nationality in that irritating and offensive way on those who, if you did not thus render it odious, would have every disposition to admire and respect it? Why will you walk in the streets of Paris and visit the sights in a shooting-coat and wideawake? Why will you go to the Opera dressed as you would not think of

dressing to appear at any minor theatre in London? Why will Browness sport a costume either so shabby or so showy that she would be ashamed to let herself be seen in it at home? and why will you both enter into a solemn compact with each other, and with every Brown and Browness who has quitted England, to turn up your noses at everything you see, hear, taste or smell, be it better or worse than what you find in England, simply because it is *not* English? At least, Brown, be logical, and if you can't bear anything that is not English, stick to England; nobody abroad wants you the least in the world. As Orlando says, when Jacques objects to Rosalind's name, "There was no thought of pleasing you when she was christened;" so, when all things fell into their places in foreign lands, it was altogether without regard to you, Brown, or to your tastes or ideas, habits or opinions; and I am afraid these nations and their ways are quite too old and stiff to change "the order of their going," even to please you.

The R—'s had, some time before my arrival, been present at the wedding of a wealthy and very respectable Jewish couple, belonging to the lower

grade of the middle-class, their presence being requested as a special favour in consideration of Mr. R—'s having been for some time acquainted with the bridegroom's family, with whom, I believe, he had had some business transactions.

And now the young couple came to pay a visit of ceremony, previously announced, to my friends.

First entered the bridegroom, "Hawaga Haco,"* as announced by Shaheen. A little man was the Hawaga, slenderly built and hollow-chested, with a smiling and not unpleasant face, good intelligent eyes, and nothing particularly Jewish in the cast of his countenance. He was dressed in white from top to toe—in his bridal costume, in fact. Of white kerseymere, or some analogous material, was his richly-braided jacket, his close-fitting under-vest, his voluminous trousers; his shoes, even, were white; and alone the inevitable tarboosh maintained its dark-red hue and its purple tassel.

Only Mrs. R— and I were at home at the moment of the guests' arrival; and the bridegroom, having made his salutations to us, he turned to present

* Hawaga, actually means merchant; but it is now commonly used for Sir or Mr.

his bride, who had followed him in unannounced. She was a little, brown, sallow creature, with rather handsome eyes, but the rest of her face plain and insignificant. She looked very young, and was as utterly destitute of manner and *tenué* as an awkward ill-bred child. After making what was supposed to represent a curtsy in answer to Mrs. R—'s greeting, she turned to an ottoman by the door, and, to our astonishment, began the following ceremony. First she deposited thereon her veil; then she took off the *habara*, or voluminous black silk mantle, which forms the outdoor covering in female Oriental costume, and which covers the wearer from head to foot, the figure being further concealed by the elbows being raised, and the cloak thus spread out wide from the bust at either side. And then she commenced, as it seemed to us, to relieve herself of her gown, a bright lilac silk—a colour much in request for dress occasions among Jewesses and Levantines, though pink and sky-blue silks and satins are also often worn on such occasions, and in the Pastré Gardens and other public places, where the Levantines, though wearing the *habara*, generally fasten it to the back of the head, leaving the

elaborate *coiffure* to be admired, and letting the folds of the mantle flow open.

One by one did the brown little bride unfasten the hooks-and-eyes of her lilac robe ; deliberately did she untie various strings that still secured it, and Mrs. R— and I were beginning to exchange inquiring and somewhat anxious looks, when down slipped the dress, which it seems was merely a pelisse, and to our relief she stepped forth in her in-door costume. This consisted of some pretty gauzy lilac and white stuff ; the body full, *à la vierge*, made as if by the hands of the cleverest French *couturière*, trimmed round the neck and flowing sleeves with a ruching of the same, and confined at the waist, which was of moderate length, by a lilac sash, with bow and long ends. But below this entirely European corsage what appeared ?— Petticoats, crinolines, flowing draperies ? Not so, Madam ; but the usual Turkish trousers, falling over the ankle, and draped with the usual train, fastened on at the back of the waist, brought forward between the ankles, looped up with the sash in front, and the end falling below the knees. Her hair was dragged back from her face, and plaited in little tails, twisted about

the sides of her head without any regard to design or symmetry : on the top, advancing to the forehead, was an elaborate ornament of twined silk and gold, and stuck in anywhere among the plaits were natural flowers, of no beauty or rarity ; marigolds, which abound in all Eastern gardens and in all Eastern bouquets, larkspurs and other common flowers, already crushed and half withered with the habara and the walk in the sun.

Mrs. R— attempted to draw her visitor into conversation. She tried her in French, which her husband said she understood and spoke a little, but vain was the effort. For reply she writhed in her chair, hung her head, glanced poutingly at her husband out of the corners of her eyes, and performed exactly the manoeuvres of a shy and half-sullen child when called upon to display its charms and aquirements before strangers.

Italian, Signor Haco said, apologetically, she could speak well ; and Mrs. R—, though not much versed in the language, got up some common-place questions, with hardly a more satisfactory result however, the bride merely replying by a mute and by no means Burleighian shake of the head, though encouraged to be more communicative by

coaxing half-asides from her husband. So, I having tried to get a word with the same success, we left her to her meditations; and while we talked to her lord, who spoke French tolerably, and was by no means difficult to get on with, I noted her, as she sat crouched deep into an arm-chair, like a frightened animal desirous to escape but afraid to move, stealthily surveying the room, and all its contents, with looks of wondering scrutiny.

The entrance of Mr. R—, however, considerably changed the aspect of affairs. An almost lifelong experience of the East and Easterns had taught him the mode of addressing all classes; so he took a seat by the little dame and began chattering to her as to a child, asking her childish questions and paying her childish compliments, with an air of frank, cheerful *bonhomie*, whose effect on the half-tamed creature was instantaneous. Her sallow face relaxed into smiles, her eyes twinkled, she twisted her foolish little head from side to side, she tittered, she put her handkerchief to her face, and answered all Mr. R—'s sallies with half-suppressed giggles, while her husband looked on, evidently charmed, as a mother would be with

any one that took notice of, and was well-received by, her spoiled and impracticable brat.

The little man brought Mrs. R— an offering of two vast glass jars, filled with the delicate Turkish conserve of roses, made by his mother from the blossoms in her garden.

This preserve is composed entirely of the fresh leaves of damask-roses and sugar; but there is some secret, and it requires peculiar care and skill, to preserve the colour and flavour of the petals in perfection. It is delicious, but so sweet and rich that I always found one or two spoonfuls enough.

In due time the visitors rose to depart, or rather to commence, on the lady's part, the process of re-dressing. This ceremony was performed with giggling *gaucherie*, especially when it came to the putting on of the veil, which was a most curious contrivance. The veil was of a large-patterned and very thick kind of lace, long and narrow; it was attached along the top to a strip of whalebone, from which came down, inside, another strip some three inches long. A string was fastened to either end of the top whalebone; and the mode of putting it on and keeping it in its place was by

tying these strings at the back of the head, and holding the lower end of the perpendicular whalebone in the mouth, the veil descending from about the middle of the nose. The visit was sufficiently interesting, but it was a great relief to all parties when it was over.

CHAPTER XI.

CAIRO.

Getting to the Station—Fairly Started—Arrival at Cairo—
Difficulties of getting Baggage—A European House in
Cairo—My Room—Night Attack—Death of the Assailant.

FROM the time of my arrival in Egypt a trip to Cairo was projected by the R—'s for my special edification ; and at the end of January, Mrs. R—and I, her husband being kept at Alexandria by business, prepared to wend our way thither.

A journey of seven hours by rail seems a simple proceeding, and in most parts of Europe it is so. This is not the case in the East.

We, the travellers, were a party of four, including Mrs. R—'s English maid ; and here is the order of our march from the house.

A brougham containing two of the party, with an English coachman to drive, a Maltese servant

to sit beside him, and an Arab saïs to run before and clear the way. A mail phaëton, in which I, the English maid, and my portmanteau are driven by Mr. R—, preceded also by a running saïs; and a dog-cart with the rest of the luggage under the charge of an English groom and a third saïs. Soon we leave the sun-baked square, and get away into the narrow streets, foul and dank, and ankle-deep in putrid mud, with no attempt at footway, and thickly crowded, and now come into play the services of the saïses.

On they bound through the mire, shouting to the listless Arabs, Turks, Greeks, and Armenians, who seem quite to have resigned themselves to the fate of being run over, and to say "It is your lookout to avoid me; I am walking in the public street, where I have every right to walk, and if you crush me, my blood be on your head. God is great."

On, with pokes, blows, thumps and pushes to the beasts, which stolidly follow the example of their masters, and will allow the skin to be torn off their sides and legs by passing wheels rather than move one inch out of the way of their own accord.

But presently comes the tug of war, as we get into the road that conducts us directly to the station.

This road, traversed daily by hundreds of carts, carriages, and beasts of draught and burden, conveying passengers and all merchandise to and from the interior, has been suffered by a paternal government that will do nothing for itself, and that has a jealous reluctance to letting anybody else do anything for it, to fall into the condition of a mere quagmire. Rolling, pitching, floundering, through we go at a foot's pace: we struggle, at imminent peril to the springs, through the sea of stiff clayey mud, overlying tremendous ruts and hollows, in many of which we find stuck fast the long heavy trucks, which the poor little horses are making frantic efforts, under the cruel lash, to extricate. How I wished to see the whip taken from the hand of the merciless fellah and applied to his own shoulders. Flog, flog, shout, shout, when the temporary removal of one bale of cotton, of one or two boxes of oranges, of a couple of the fellahs you often see huddled up in the carts, with their knees on a level with their chins in stolid apathy, would at once relieve the poor, willing little beasts from their painful predicament.

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In the course of time we arrive at the station, happily without a break-down, make our way into the waiting-room, to which the cave of Trophobius must have been bright and cheery, and, after spending therein a good half-hour (you must allow at least half an hour over the time really necessary to get to the station, in anticipation of possible accidents by the way) we leave the dark den, from whose walls the discoloured paper is dropping, from the damp, and get on the platform, crowded with Arabs, evidently stationed in the vague essentially Arab hope of backsheesh to be picked up for such services as the lighting of a cigar or the picking up of a parcel which you wish left alone, and embark in the carriage we have been lucky enough to secure for ourselves only.

For many miles the line runs on a raised tramway along the reedy marsh that lies between the canal and the great salt lake Mareoutis, and no words can describe the dreariness of that route. On, on, through eternal flats, here reeds, here muddy ooze, here dark sands, thickly strewn with salt crystals, like large hailstones, which are collected from time to time and form an article of commerce. On the lake are vast flocks of wild

ducks, which are caught alive by divers plunging beneath the surface at a certain distance from them and catching them by the feet, and some wild geese ; while a little white-breasted sort of plover skims the water and wheels in rapid and graceful flight.

Soon comes the gorgeous Egyptian sunset, and sky and lake glow with flames of gold and violet, of crimson, and copper, and pale green, and we are glad to bid adieu to the dismal landscape. About dark we stop at the first station and remain there, no one seems to have the remotest notion why, for half an hour : then on, with occasional brief stoppages to Kaffarzyat ; there we get a tolerable dinner, which, however, we have but little time to discuss, the warning bell summoning us back to the carriages.

Not more than three quarters of an hour behind time, *i.e.* about eleven, we reach Cairo, where a friend meets us with a carriage, an open European fly, driven by an Arab in a dirty white blanket coat, with a peaked hood thereto. In the yard are other flies and omnibuses from the different hotels, attended by active touters, speaking all languages very badly, and one or two long, high, odd-looking

vehicles, drawn by stout mules, and having perched on the high seat by the driver an Arab with a flaring meschal, dispensing its fiery fragments and strong resinous smell.

Our friend Mr. C— goes to see about our luggage. It is there all safe with the rest, but the railroad people declare it is so late they really think it is not worth while to take the trouble of looking it out to night; surely it will be time enough to see about it to-morrow. Mr. C— insists; there are all the things we want for to-night, and the first thing in the morning; passengers have a right to claim their luggage at once, and take it away with them.

No attempt is made to deny such *is* the right and the rule, but it is so much trouble! and it is so late! Finally after Mrs. R— and I have sat in the fly till our patience is almost exhausted, the luggage is brought, Mr. C— having stood his ground till it was looked out and placed on the shoulders of the Arab porters.

Off we go through the Esbekeeeieh or principal European quarter, till we turn into some streets so narrow and so dark, from the upper stories of the houses advancing, and the roofs

again deeply overlapping these, that a sense of oppression comes over you, and you feel as if you wanted to push the houses back in order to breathe freely.

Suddenly we stop at a massive door in a wall, and knocking, it opens, and we descend from the carriage and pass through a gloomy archway into a yard ; stone steps conduct us into a large flagged hall, and thence we ascend by a rather handsomely-designed but much worn (everything within and without the house is much worn) stone staircase lighted from the top ; and from the sort of ante-chamber which forms the landing, and on which many of the rooms open, we are ushered into the sitting-room.

This is a large apartment, the walls coloured in a very streaky fashion with a pale green wash. There are four windows without curtains or blinds, (of course there are jalousies outside, which all dwellers in Egypt, Europeans as well as natives, have a strange fancy for always keeping shut, as much in rain and gloom as in the by no means oppressive sunshine of an Egyptian winter), an ancient Turkey carpet in the centre, surrounded with matting, a table on which we behold with joy the

tea equipage laid out, two chintz-covered divans, sundry odd chairs and tables, mostly aged, and of common European manufacture, and an American cast-iron stove, in which a tremendous coal fire is blazing.

From the salon my bed-room opens. A small room (for Egypt, where large and lofty apartments abound), furnished in the same incongruous fashion as the sitting-room: the walls are hung with a quaint, old-fashioned French paper, representing in the most glaring colours out-door fêtes—it seems to me Versailles is the *locale*—attended by *promeneurs* in costumes of the Empire. In one corner is a group of English, intended as caricatures, but in dresses merely ridiculous in a different fashion from those of the Paris *beaux* and *élégantes* who surround them.

Tired I creep within my pink mosquito net into my very hard bed, prepared to get through the night with tranquil slumbers.

But I have counted without consideration of a hungry and savage mosquito, which has found its way through the net, and which is not to be repulsed by the frequent slaps I deal to my own

cheeks, chin, and forehead, when he with trumpet charges makes descents thereon. But in the morning I will have my revenge.

Waking I find my enemy, bloated and gorged, in a state of semi-torpid repletion, reposing on the net. Gently I advance, gently, gently, for he must not be disturbed, neither must the gore with which he is distended be allowed to stain the roseate delicacy of the curtain:—gently, gently, controlling the slight trepidation caused by the trembling excitement attendant on the joys of the chase when the chance of securing the quarry quivers in the balance; gently, gently I approach with finger and thumb, delicately to pick him from his perch previous to annihilating him.

Nearer, nearer—still he stirs not—Oh joy! I have him! and his blood, in which so very large a proportion of my own is mingled, pays the price of his temerity.

All this time I have not at all realised the fact that I am in Cairo. Last night was too dark to give me anything like an idea of the out-door aspect of the place, and since I crossed the thresh-

old of the massive door in the wall, nearly all I have seen might perfectly belong to an old half-deserted house in some out-of-the-way French town.

It is reserved for my first excursion into the bazaars and the streets of this Dream City to gain any idea of its marvels.

CHAPTER XII.

AL SOUQ

The Esbekeeeieh—A Turkish Conquest—Donkey-boys—En Passant—The Pacha's Cure for Ophthalmia—The Turkish Bazaar—The Court of Carpets—Turkish School—The Turks and I—Turkish Bargaining—The Different Trades—The Way Home.

BREAKFAST despatched, donkeys were sent for, and attended by Mr. C—, who, having been for some time resident in Cairo, and a friend of Mr. R—'s family, constituted himself our escort and cicerone, we started for a visit to the town and the bazaars.

Emerging from the narrow street in which the house we occupied was built, we came upon the Esbekeeeieh, or fashionable European quarter. This is a large square, built round with tall irregular houses, some of them hotels, and not by

any means bad ones, especially the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs.

Here also is "Shepherd's," especially known to all Indian passengers, and of general repute among Eastern travellers.

The centre of the square is filled with trees, and all round, beneath the shade of the spreading lebbeck—a sort of acacia, still, though the season was the end of January, in full leaf—is a broad promenade like the Champs Elysées, where are little cafés, chiefly kept by Italians, that supply the *promeneurs* with coffee, lemonade, *syrop de gomme*, *pana di Espana*, and cigar lights, as they sit at little tables, criticising and being criticised by the passers-by, and pestered by innumerable *meskeens*, who, having no fears of the policeman before their eyes, beg with a perseverance and energy worthy of a better employment.

It is towards four o'clock that the Esbekeeeieh is in all its glory.

Then do congregate here all the beauty and fashion of Cairo. Up and down, chiefly along one side more in favour than the rest, Europeans, Turks, Armenians, Arabs, &c., pace between the rows of wooden chairs and tables where others are

seated looking on. A band plays here twice a week, and these days are, of course, the most attended.

Wonderful are the toilettes here displayed, chiefly among the Levantine women, who carry into the European costume they are so fond of adopting, the brilliant and gaudy combinations and contrasts of colour that look so well and picturesque in the East. Scarlet, lilac, sky-blue, yellow, purple, amaranth, green, all meet in the gown, the cloak, the bonnet, or the hat, now occasionally adopted by the young girls, as they waddle in the centre of their ill-sitting crinolines, looking the picture of embarrassed discomfort.

Turks are there—dandy young Turks, pale, slim, sallow, and supercilious; shabby old Turks, fat, grey, and grave, yet with often a roguish twinkle in their cunning old eyes; Turks of tender age, both boys and girls (of course only *little* girls), chubby, slow, heavy, and pasty complexioned. Among the groups is always to be seen a half-crazy old fellow, Marri Bey (the name I spell by the sound—the title Bey is equivalent to colonel, though it is not even necessary that the person on whom it is conferred as an honorary

distinction should be a military man), who speaking a smattering of French, English, and Italian, especially affects the society of Europeans, and professes himself a most ardent admirer of European, and particularly English ladies. He has not the slightest scruple in joining any group he may see walking or seated, though they may be total strangers to him, and nothing but the utmost determination will drive him away. Knowing a gentleman with whom we were out one day by sight, he came and took a seat by us, and asked aloud in French who we were. Receiving an evasive answer, he proceeded to kiss his hand to me, expressing his opinion that I was *bien jolie*, that he saw at once I was English, that he always admired Englishwomen, and that if it were not for his wife at home,—who kept him very strict, and only gave him so many piastres a day to go out and amuse himself,—he would ask my hand in marriage.

He then recapitulated the names of all the great men he had (or had not) seen in a visit he once made to Europe, and all the compliments he paid him on the grace and distinction of his manners.

“Marri Bey, *homme très comme il faut*—perfect gentleman,” was the speech of the Duke of Wellington, I remember; and crowned heads had expressed themselves not less flatteringly.

We could only get rid of him by representing that a lady sitting at some distance, with whom we had previously seen him conversing, would be jealous and wounded if he remained too long with us; and he immediately rejoined her, but soon returned for a few moments to inform us, in great glee, that she had said he was such a flirt that she would have nothing more to say to him.

Itinerant merchants, too, come round and offer for sale turquoises, real or false, as the case may be, oriental arms, horse-housings, embroidery, and ostrich eggs engraved with Turkish characters; and active among the groups are the Greek and Arab waiters of the little wooden cafés, serving customers and adding up their small scores for their very slight refreshments.

Within hail are stationed carriages and flies, with Arab horses and Arab drivers, and donkeys, with Arab donkey-boys, characters of no mean importance, some whom, if you do not speak Arabic or Turkish, you are obliged in your visits to the

bazaars to depend upon entirely, to take you to what shops they choose, or if you see any objects you wish to purchase, to make all your bargains for you. Of course they find their account in this; but *quoi faire?* you cannot do without them, and I don't think they cheat you to any great extent, especially if you can get one recommended by any responsible person, and always employ the same, a plan we adopted with satisfactory results.

Having passed by the Esbekeeh, not yet brilliant with the *élite* of Cairene society, we proceeded to the bazaars; and now I felt that I was indeed in an Oriental city.

Quite suddenly you become aware of the change, though not at the commencement of the bazaars does it strike you in its fullest force that you have left modern Europeanism behind you, and are in the heart of the Orientalism of centuries ago.

First you pass up a tolerably wide passage, called the Mooskee, the first part roofed, which makes it damp and gloomy, with shops on either side, the upper floors being dwelling-houses. These shops being held by various nationalities have not

yet the essentially Eastern type, though the wares they sell are chiefly Oriental; the aspect of the houses overhead, with their jealous little windows closed by the wooden open-work, and that of most of the passers-by are essentially so, for very few Europeans—hardly any of the women—are to be seen in the bazaars, called *Al Souq*, in Arabic.

This part is comparatively little crowded, and you get on pretty well, guiding your donkey yourself, the boy walking along with his hand on the animal's croup, contenting himself with an occasional shout of warning, or a caution to his donkey to step carefully when he comes to a slippery place, where the flat plates he wears for shoes render him particularly liable to fall: the donkey heeds these warnings always, and you feel him begin to tread carefully under you when they are uttered. Now and then the boy makes a dart at a stall, from which he bears away a handful from the crushed sticky heaps of dried dates, around which myriads of flies are buzzing, or a tug at a donkey or camel load of *berseem*, as a regale—after he has picked out a tempting sprig or two for his own eating—for his ass, or begs a draught of water from the brazen saucer of a *saka*, or water-carrier.

At the end of this passage runs a cross one : we take the turning to the left, and are at once in the very heart and centre of Orientalism.

The path, which descends, is very narrow and densely crowded, and now your donkey-boy comes to the head of your *monture*, and you give yourself up into his hands ; you are no longer responsible for your own safety ; it is for *him* to see you well out of the fray, and you sit quietly on your beast and look about you, while he shouts to men and women, knocks children and dogs on the head, shoves away other donkeys, pilots you under the uplifted heads and among the legs of camels, and just saves you from having yours torn off by the wheels of a bullock-cart or jammed against an ugly corner.

Truly it is miraculous how you do get through these crowds without accident ! and also how you take it as a matter of course that you will do so, and keep looking about and taking note of all that passes as from the quietest post of observation, without the least concernment for your own safety.

In this crowd you see little of the place—the moving panorama attracts all your attention.

Here Oriental costume is universal, Oriental custom no less so. A group of young Turks smoking together on the divan in an open shop, languid, listless, with yellow unhealthy faces, heavy eyes, thick lips, and thin moustaches, lift their stooping figures as we pass, and gaze at us with a curiously mingled expression of surprise, audacity, and contempt. As we stop a few moments in the crowd, a beggar-woman comes to crave, "Backsheesh, ya sittih!" and stooping down, kisses the hem of my garment. There is a mighty pother and clatter, and we are jammed immovably by a sudden falling back to either side of the mass, and in the passage thus opened bounds past a saïs, with flying garments and wand of office, preceding an inky Nubian eunuch; some important functionary, keeper, probably, of the viceregal, or of one of the princely hareems,* or, very probably Mesrour himself, mounted on a huge milk-white thoroughbred donkey, in trappings of red and gold, and followed by a band of attendants, all keeping up on foot with the swinging trot of the ass. Here, amid the crowd, and noise, and stir, a pious Mussulman, seated on his divan, reads aloud the Koran, with

* Harem is the Arab, Hareem the Turkish word.


monotonous chant and body rocking to and fro with ceaseless motion. Now comes by the funeral of a child. The mourners are few, and evidently already consoled, for they dash on as hastily as the crowd permits, looking about with a most unconcerned air, and seeming to think the sooner the job is finished the better; and itinerant merchants of rags wander about, crying their wares.

The frightful prevalence of total, and yet more, of partial blindness, the result of ophthalmia, particularly strikes you here. I was told that the malady was not, however, exclusively to blame in the matter. For a long time it had been a common custom among Turkish and Arab mothers to put out one of the eyes of their new-born male infants, to save them from the conscription. A late pacha, therefore, raised a one-eyed regiment, since which ophthalmia has been left to do its work alone, and most effectually it performs it. Europeans in the East, who rarely suffer from the disease, declare that common attention to the eyes, not sleeping with them uncovered in the night air, and washing them carefully after exposure to glare and dust, will almost always ward off this

frightful scourge. But no; if it be the will of Allah that they should go blind, who are they that they should oppose it? their fathers never washed their eyes, why should they? *La illáh il' Allah*, there is no deity but God. So they go with eyes unwashed, fatigued with the glare of the sun, irritated with the white gritty dust of the desert, tormented with flies, unshaded by the bald tarboosh, (hardly any Turks or Arabs of the lower class wear the turban,) and ophthalmia follows almost naturally; and they get well or go blind, as the case may be. The fact of there being no deity but God, and of Mahomet being his prophet, is a perfectly relevant answer to any remonstrance or advice on the subject.

Another turn, this time to the right, up a little passage so narrow that two donkeys can hardly go abreast, and all is repose and stillness. This is the Turkish bazaar.

Mrs. R— wanted to buy some Turkish rugs, and for this purpose we dismounted from our donkeys and entered a little damp dilapidated court, surrounded by, apparently, the backs of tall houses, at the foot of which stood the open stalls of the merchants of carpets, hung round with their



brilliant wares. We looked at some of these ; but the prices asked being far beyond the usual market value, Mrs. R— decided on waiting to make her purchases until the arrival of her husband, for Mr. R— spoke Turkish, an accomplishment which possesses a talismanic power in the East.

A few days later he joined us, and we once more proceeded to where we had seen the rugs, and while he and Mrs. R— bargained, I sat down on the divan of a neighbouring stall, which, like many others, was untenanted, and looked about me.

A wonderful place surely ! The ground rough, damp, dirty ; around, the stalls hung all over with carpets and rugs of the richest and most brilliant dyes. On the divans, silently seated here and there, a Turk, smoking, and drinking coffee out of a tiny cup ; looking utterly indifferent as to whether the livelong day goes by without bringing him a customer. He can drive a precious hard bargain though, when one *does* present himself, and for all his apparent indifference he is keeping a sharp look-out, to see if the bargainers at the neighbouring stalls are not likely to be coming his way. Behind the stalls, rise high,

lofty, creviced, dangerous walls—it is said that a week's rain, if the climate permitted of such a thing, which happily it does not, would bring down half Cairo—with here and there a tiny window, or cage-like balcony stuck against the wall. But no face looks through any outlet; no one speaks, beyond a guttural word or two, muttered through the teeth that hold the pipe; no one passes to and fro, no woman is visible, no sound penetrates from the busy world we have just left; no ray of sunshine falls from the patch of blue sky far far above. All is dull and still and torpid as death. Opposite to where I sit is a large open gallery, which is being used as a schoolroom for Turks of tender years. Here is as little of noise and of life as elsewhere; the children con and repeat their lessons from the Koran, with the sleepy monotony and drowsy rocking movement always adopted when engaged in that lulling occupation. One falls under the displeasure of the solemn pedagogue, who actually rouses himself to the point of bestowing corporeal chastisement. But you see he does it in an unreal dreamy fashion; the very blows fall slowly and with muffled sound, and the boy cries a little in a mechanical, conventional

way, more as if he were performing some customary and totally uninteresting ceremony than giving vent to the natural feelings of a small boy undergoing condign punishment.

Presently a jolly old Turk of benign countenance—nearly all the old and middle-aged Turks have an aspect of being in good case, and well to do, and have a look of sly goodnature in the wrinkles about their eyes, while with few exceptions the young ones appear sickly, listless, and discontented—came to the stall where I was sitting, of which he was evidently the owner, and placed himself on the other end of the divan, pipe in mouth. I rose, but he shook his head, smiled, and saying a few, to me, unintelligible words, motioned me to keep my place. I smiled in return, made a gesture of thanks, and we sat smiling and occasionally nodding at each other, a proceeding which seemed to afford him as much gratification as it did to the Aged, when resorted to by Pip at Wemmick's request. Presently another old Turk of similar presence to the first, came and joined us, and he too smoked and nodded and smiled, until I began to feel that the situation was becoming somewhat prolonged, and to desire the appearance of some *Deus ex*

machinâ to bring it to a period without any abruptness on my part. Occasionally the two old fellows exchanged low muttered sentences, which resulted in one of them bringing from an inner recess—all these stalls, which are very small, have a large dark room behind them, in which is kept the main bulk and the choicer articles of the stock in trade—a bundle of gold-embroidered smoking caps, slippers, tobacco bags, and other useless trifles, and laying them before me. Luckily, at this instant the R—'s, having completed their purchases at the neighbouring stall, came to mine, and Mr. R—, addressing a few words to the first old man in Turkish, was welcomed with considerable *empressement*. Mr. R— shaking his head at the small wares held up for his inspection, the old fellow proceeded to draw forth richer and more tempting goods, finally producing a really beautiful table-cover of fine scarlet cloth charmingly embroidered with large bouquets of white starry flowers and spreading green leaves, intermixed with ciphers in gold. Bargaining now began in the usual fashion, the seller asking nearly twice the value of the article, the buyer offering something a good deal below its worth, and the one

descending in his demands, and the other rising in his bidding, till something like a just price was arrived at, and the table-cover changed hands with a declaration from its late possessor that only for the eyes of the ladies had he been induced to make such a sacrifice. He seemed very cheerful under it, however, and begged we would renew our visit.

I have never seen in Europe any Turkish or Persian rugs at all comparable in beauty of design and quality, or splendour of colouring, to some of those at the bazaars: probably this proceeds from the fact, that only the inferior ones are displayed in the first instance, the really fine ones being kept in reserve for more knowing purchasers.

Mrs. R— had in her house a most singular carpet, used as a *portière*, which came, if I remember right, from Koordistan. Into the fabric was worked here and there, at the caprice of the weaver, a feather, or a lock of human hair, soft brown hair, as of a young woman or child, not wrought in with the wool, but caught by the stem or roots, and allowed to hang loose. I never saw but one specimen of this kind of rug, and do not know if this curious introduction be general.

From thence we went on to the silk bazaar, kept chiefly by Levantines—small, meagre men, far harder and sharper bargainers than even the Turks; to the bazaars where the tent-makers were at work and the tailors, and gold-lace makers and embroiderers; to where red and yellow slippers were manufactured and sold, and horse and ass housings, and iron and brass-work, and pottery, and stools and little tables, and caskets and hand-mirrors of coarse mother-of-pearl inlaying; and to where men and lads, with arms naked to the shoulder, and stained deep blue, were dyeing with indigo the cotton stuffs almost exclusively worn by the fellaheen, male and female.

Lastly to the spice bazaar, where the air of the close alleys is heavy with odours of Araby, that hang on the listless pent-up air with an overpowering richness.

And all these courses through the narrow, narrow passages, passing between not the shops only, but lofty houses, the top storeys nearly meeting; magnificent mosques, centuries old, with their great domes and exquisite minarets, where the kites are sitting or fighting for their prey, and whose basements are so worn and crumbled away

by the constant friction of the passers-by that you see what must, ere very many years are gone by, be their fate.

It is pleasant when you come to a quiet corner to stop and look up and see these beauteous buildings, rising above the low, and dark, and squalid foundations up into the pure air, up into the sunshine, up into the deep-blue sky, against which soars softly with graceful flight a long-winged kite, or it may be a rapid dove that skims across the space.

And so from the bazaars out through narrow and apparently half-deserted streets, past mosques, and palaces, and gardens of palms, through paths leading between fields of cotton and sugar-cane, home to the old French house, tired, but in a dream of delight.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM ROOF AND BALCONY.

A Cairene Garden—Muezzin—Camels—Giraffes—Lions—
View of the City—Impressions of Cairo.

It seems to me that Cairo is a place I should never tire of. Everything has its Eastern type, its Eastern origin, its Eastern character so strongly and tangibly marked on it; there is such an unceasing interest in tracing continually traits of the habits, manners, and characteristics with which the Bible, Oriental history, and Oriental romance have made us familiar, but without conveying till now any very distinct idea thereof. The climate is, to my mind, so delicious, the vegetation so splendid, the environs so instinct with wonder and interest, that each day of my stay was one of fresh delight.

At the back of our house was a walled garden of some size, and it was enough for me to sit of a

morning in the sun on the verandah that overlooked it, and breathe the light air, and look and listen.

The garden itself had never been well laid out—no gardens here are—and from neglect it had become little better than a wilderness; but a wilderness composed of trees and shrubs that only the greenhouse or hothouse can produce with us.

There was the caoutchouc, the date palm, the palma christi, with its beautiful bronze-tinted foliage, the shaddock, whose fruit is as large as a moderately sized melon, yellow without, blood-red within, of somewhat coarse texture, but full of refreshing, acid-sweet juice; the orange-tree—Cairo produces delicious oranges in abundance, the best being the blood and egg oranges; great straggling rose-trees; bananas of grand foliage, but, to me, most sickly-flavoured fruit; a tree with falling clusters of beautiful scarlet blossoms; and several others of varied growth, foliage, and flower, but with names to me unknown.

In one corner was a vast sycamore fig of noble growth; and here were wont to shelter doves in its lower branches, in its upper kites and crows, and strange to say the inhabitants of this

superior *étage* seemed in no way to molest their neighbours below, although the kites fought savagely among themselves.

Beyond were peeps of other gardens, with trees, bright flowers, and oranges glowing red-gold in the sun, and in an opening yet further on up sprang the shaft of a lofty minaret piercing the blue sky.

Near the top was the usual light railed gallery, whence, at stated hours, the muezzin called the faithful to prayer, and where the kites perched, and hovered, and wheeled, and did fierce battle for prey. Wonderfully solemn and sweet came the prolonged chant of the muezzin from his lofty tower, sending the summons forth afar through the still air; the voice (the muezzins are carefully selected for the beauty and sonority of their voices) now rising and swelling with a remarkable force and power of sustainment, now falling, to mount again.

On the right the garden wall divided us from the premises of a rich Turk of rank, lately deceased, Selim Pacha (of whose establishment more anon), and from a large yard surrounded with sheds, which seemed to belong to some hostelry,

as horses, asses, and camels were continually coming and going and wandering therein.

The patience of the camel was here remarkably shown. I have seen the beasts of a morning lying to be loaded, with their knees doubled under them, and their hind legs folded and tucked up in a fashion totally impossible to describe. The burden has been gradually heaped on their poor humps, generally without remonstrance, though when hurt or overloaded a groan escaped them. As soon as the work was accomplished, their drivers left them ; and there during the livelong day they would lie, dreamily, with half-closed eyes, chewing the cud, and only now and then shifting their position just enough to relieve their cramped limbs, but never attempting to rise without permission. Once or twice in the day their masters would come and empty before them a measure of what looked like chopped straw, and this they ate as they lay. I suppose water was given to them, but I never saw it.

But at the back of the house was a yard filled with far less tractable occupants.


In all Eastern houses a staircase leads to the flat roof, and from thence a great extent of

prospect, as well as a close inspection of your neighbour's premises, is obtained. From this safe post of observation, on which the great sycamore-fig in the garden sprinkled its foliage, now beginning to fall, I could look down on six giraffes, of different sizes and ages, wandering at liberty in the yard, and a lion and lioness from the upper country, in apparently very rickety wooden cages. How they abhorred their confinement no words could tell. At times a mortal ennui seemed to paralyse their energies, and they lay inert and utterly listless; then a blind fury would seize them—very likely they suffered from the pangs of hunger, beasts in the East being habitually ill-used and neglected—and terrific roars, at night especially terrible to hear, would resound as they tramped to and fro in their frail-looking prisons, threatening to burst their bonds and rush on the helpless giraffes, which, however, I suppose from habit, seemed but little disturbed by such demonstrations.

Turning from these fierce captives and looking out over the gardens, a view of the city spread before me with its lofty creviced houses, its palaces and hareems, its stately mosques, commonly

coloured in alternate layers of red and white, their domes covered with the loveliest traceries, and their unspeakably graceful and beautiful minarets; with its palm, and orange gardens and plantations of olive and gum-arabic trees; and beyond, the desert wide and dun, and the Red Hills, a group of rugged mounds of that colour, red sandstone, I suppose,—pardon me, geologists, if I have made some mighty blunder, I know nought, I am sorry to say, of your science—which glow in the sunset like masses of red-hot metal.

I wish I could say what I feel about this place without being rhapsodical; that I could do justice even to my own sense of its overwhelming power over my interest and admiration, its irresistible influence on my feelings and my imagination! to the sense it gives me of a new phase of life, of totally new sensations, of vastness, of immutableness, of the past and present blended into one, of the “thousand years as one day, the one day as a thousand years,” of an unreal reality, a waking dream! And I, a lonely woman, fresh from the ultra-civilization, the latest modernism of the two greatest capitals in the world, suddenly set down



in the midst of this world-old Orientalism, sucked into its vortex without a struggle, yielding unresistingly to its influence, feeling happy, at rest, at home!

How long this feeling might have lasted is a question which I will not stop now to discuss.

CHAPTER XIV.

A TURKISH WEDDING.

The Preparations—The Invitation—The Reception — Costumes — The Aroussa — An Ancient Bacchante — Une Maitresse Femme—The Feast—The Bridegroom—"Something rotten in the state of Denmark."

WOMEN travelling in the East have one advantage over male voyagers, and that is, the power of entering into the penetralia of the harem, if an opportunity for so doing be afforded them.

In the house next to the one in which I was staying, and to which I have already alluded, a wedding was in progress; I say in progress, seeing that the ceremonies attendant thereon lasted five days. The house in question had belonged to Selim Pacha, a Turkish grandee, and very wealthy, but who had shortly before quitted this sublunary sphere, leaving his wealth, his harem, and his children, under the tutelage of persons appointed to undertake that charge. It was his eldest son,

a youth who had attained the ripe age of fourteen, who was now being married. The bride was a Circassian slave, brought up and much beloved by the mother of Abbas Pacha, late nephew to the reigning Viceroy. The old lady being of an advanced age, and wishing to provide for her protégée before her death, had made up the present match.

Often, sunning myself on the balcony, I used to look with curiosity into my neighbour's premises. The house, a very large one, stood between a court and a garden, far back from the street, much farther than ours, so that we commanded a view of the whole of one side of it.

It was built with the usual flat roof which is common to all dwellings in Egypt, and with the windows of the harem, only excepting those looking on the gardens which specially belonged to it, very small and so high up as to be quite beyond the reach of the inmates. Even the windows on the garden had close carved lattice-work, more than half their height outside the casements. Attached to the house were a number of out-buildings, most of them in grievous want of repair, as is the custom of those regions, where hardly a wall is without cracks and seams, to say

nothing of more serious dilapidation. The space between some of these buildings was closed in by canvas coverings, and from thence proceeded frequently sounds of music, chiefly instrumental, but occasionally vocal as well. I had never heard Turkish music performed by a Turkish band, and was very glad of this opportunity. The music was quite peculiar, unlike any other I have had any experience of, and some of it was really fine. To English ears it has little melody—using the word in the technical sense—is generally monotonous and often trivial—but occasionally there come wild bursts, snatches of “sad perplexed minors,” that are very striking indeed. There are often, too, odd breaks in the air, as played by the leading instrument, while the accompaniment fills up the space until it be resumed, and then keeps up rather an echo of it than a simultaneous sound, which, in itself, produces a singular effect. The instruments I could not see; they seemed to be chiefly of brass, with drums of a dull sound, tambourines, and some other instruments in the nature of cymbals, but less loud and clashing.

From chimneys built in all sorts of queer places, most of them opening a little above the surface of

the ground, issued the smoke of the cookery perpetually going on—forty sheep alone were slaughtered for the occasion, and the quantity of poultry sacrificed must have been almost beyond computation. The kites, which swarm in Cairo, gathered by scores to pick up the offal cast into the yards. At times the air would be literally darkened and troubled by the wheelings of these picturesque scavengers, and resonant with their little vibrating tremulous whistle; while rows of them sat along the parapet running round the roof. Now and then some of the number would swoop, rise again with a prize, and then would commence a chase of doublings, soarings, twistings, wheelings, and sharp cries; while at times one who had been so fortunate as to carry out his prey unobserved, might be seen tearing and devouring it with claws and beak while still on the wing.

So much for the exoteric turn of matters. But soon an unexpected opportunity was given me of judging of the esoteric; an invitation, of which the following is a literal translation, being procured by one of my friends, through a Turkish acquaintance intimate with the family of the bridegroom.

To the most illustrious Mr. C.

The Lord having afforded Mahomed Bey, son of the late Selim Pacha Titurigi, happiness and joy, he desires that thou shouldest be pleased to see it, and therefore begs thee to honour the above-mentioned Bey's house, near the Esbekéeieh by your company, this evening, Wednesday 7 Sciaban 1278, at half-past one by Turkish reckoning, together with the lady Madame R— and the other lady. May the Almighty prolong thy life. The seal (or stamp) of

IBRAHIM WEKIL.*

It will be observed that in this invitation no particular allusion is made to the occasion on which "happiness and joy" are "afforded by the Lord" unto Mahomed Bey, it being entirely contrary to Turkish etiquette for men ever to make any mention to each other of their harems or the inhabitants thereof. Turks do not sign their names in writing, but stamp them with a signet, which they always carry about for the purpose.

* Wekil, pronounced Wekeel, is an overseer—a sort of deputy or representative.

This invitation was for the last day of the festival. It had been announced to us some time previously that we were to receive it, and about five o'clock it was brought by a messenger, with a request that we would accompany him to the house. We entered a court-yard, crossed it, and found ourselves in a sort of outer hall, where a number of persons and some of the musicians were assembled. Here we had to separate from the gentleman who accompanied us, he being led to join the male guests, while a Nubian eunuch, lifting the heavy curtain that fell over an arch, conducted Mrs. R—and myself to the staircase leading to the harem. Mounting this, we were met by a Circassian slave, light-skinned and fair-haired, with a very beautiful figure though a somewhat plain face, and by her we were ushered into a large room, where several inmates of the harem were scattered in picturesque confusion.

Anything more strangely incongruous than the aspect of the place and its inhabitants it is impossible to conceive. The walls of the room were covered with an ugly common European paper, and the floor with a gaudy and equally ugly Brussels carpet. Round the walls were ranged

a drawing-room set of two sofas and some chairs covered with dark-green silk. In the middle of the room stood a little round table, with a covering of the cheapest and most ordinary brown and white cotton print, trimmed with a coarse edging, such as may be bought in England for about a penny the dozen yards.

At one end of the room three large windows, but sheltered outside with the carved lattice-work, looked into the garden, and all along this end was a divan of crimson and gold-coloured satin, while some large cushions of the same were placed on the floor. On these sofas and chairs some of the ladies were sitting; others were gathered up with their legs under them—not cross-legged—the Turks, both men and women, generally keep their legs up on their seat, but rather tucked up than crossed—and others squatted on the cushions and on the carpets, amid pipes and coffee-cups.

Of these ladies truth compels me to state that few were young, still fewer at all good-looking. They were of all shades of complexion and casts of feature, one or two being nearly black with negro faces, while others were fair and had no Oriental type at all in their countenances. Not

one, however, had the slightest freshness or brightness of colouring, and the weary listlessness of expression visible—in the slaves especially—was too marked to escape notice. Many of the older women were extremely fat, and so unwieldy, that when they sat down, they had to be hauled up by some of their more active companions. .

I observed that the same incongruity which marked the style of the furniture, displayed itself in the women's dresses. A few were handsomely attired; others wore a curious mixture of splendour and shabbiness; others were mere bundles of old clothes.

The costume consisted, first of the nondescript garment looking like half skirt, half trousers, wrapped loosely about the figure from the waist to the feet. This is a necessary part of every dress. Over this some wore a tunic of another colour and material. Sometimes the dress had a body to correspond, crossing over the bosom with large loose sleeves and very short waist. But in general a jacket, long or short, in some cases quite loose, in others fitting the figure pretty closely, was worn over an undervest. The head-dress consisted generally of a little Cashmere handker-

chief, black, or some bright colour, and edged with gold or silver tinsel or spangles, pinned about the head; in some cases it was decorated with stars and other ornaments in diamonds; but some of the ladies, the old ones especially, had their heads tied up in anything that came to hand. I did not see a single turban in the harem. Long hair seems much prized among these fair ones, and I was amused at the naïve attempts made by some of those who evidently studied appearance, to produce a semblance of it. I (being short-sighted) was struck with admiration at the two long thick plaited tails that fell low down the back of a lady handsomely dressed in rich lilac silk, trimmed with silver. But when the lady approached, I perceived that the hair which showed under her head-dress was black, while the tails were of a light brown.

To return to our reception. We were led to the divan at the end of the room, where two or three of the women were lounging, and where a fat, shabby, elderly lady, (as a general rule all the elderly ladies were fat and shabby,) with a good countenance, addressed herself to us. Mrs. R— speaking Arabic, with which most of the women are ac-

quainted, though their own language is Turkish, and this being an accomplishment which I had not attained to, the burden of conversation fell on her. While she and the old lady conversed, all the others looked on and listened, occasionally making remarks to each other in Turkish on the subject, as it seemed, of their discourse. Meantime pipes and coffee were brought us by two young slaves, better dressed than the generality of their mistresses, with whom they seemed on very easy terms. The pipes were long chibouks, having amber mouth-pieces ornamented with diamonds; and the tobacco was so mild that I found it rather agreeable to smoke. The coffee, which was very strong and very sweet, and without milk, was served scalding hot, in tiny China cups, called *fingans*, without saucers, but inserted in *zarfs*, which are precisely like egg-cups: these are in universal use in Egypt as well with Europeans as with Turks. The common sort are made of clay or brass, the better of silver filigree; and some of the finest are of magnificent materials and workmanship. Those on the present occasion were of open-work silver, with medallions of flowers in coloured enamels. And here I may remark that, throughout,

the manners of these women were precisely those of children; children who lived a life of perpetual idleness, who were for the most part considerably bored thereby, and who were pleased and amused to get hold of anything in the way of novelty, and disposed to be kind and courteous to the strangers who brought them a new sensation.

The old lady having asked innumerable questions as to our harems, ages, families, and so forth, then commenced an examination of some trinkets we wore. A gold bracelet with little golden balls hanging from it having especially attracted the dame's attention, she clasped it on her own wrist, and having contemplated it with considerable complacency, calmly requested my friend to make her a *backsheesh* thereof; but the request being declined on the score that the bracelet was a keepsake, she returned it somewhat disappointed, but not the least abashed at the refusal. Meanwhile innumerable women, whom we had not seen at first, came and went gliding about silently in yellow or embroidered slippers, though some wore leather boots apparently of European make, but embroidered up the fronts with gold. Presently, when we were beginning rather to wonder what was to

be done next, there was a little stir in the room, and in walked a rather short and stout old lady, whose toilette was by no means remarkable for either elegance or tidiness, and whose head was bound up in two dark cotton pocket-handkerchiefs of the very commonest kind—one round her forehead, the other tied under her chin, gipsy-fashion, the corner hanging down behind, while a small interregnum of extremely unkempt hair was visible between the two.

This lady, whose graciousness and dignity were in nowise affected by her state of deshabbille, made us welcome in a way that showed she was the chief personage of the house; and indeed her manner was not without a certain ease and courtesy. She was, I believe, the mother of the defunct Selim Pacha, and grandmother of the bridegroom, consequently mistress of the harem.

During all this time we had not the slightest idea of the programme of the entertainment, how long we were expected to stay, or what we were expected to do. This was, as may be supposed, a slight source of embarrassment, especially as the conversation began most palpably to flag. The striking up of some music—the musicians being

invisible—was a little relief. Most singular music it was. First came a dull monotonous sound, as of tambourines without bells being struck in rhythm, first with the knuckles, then with the palm of the hand. Presently followed the voices of eunuchs and women rising in one long vibrating shrill cry on a single note, beginning softly, swelling by degrees into a ringing, tremulous, thrilling treble, which had an almost unearthly sound, then ceasing by degrees; the tambourine accompaniment forming all the while a sort of background which still added to the effect. This we were told was called a fantasia; but I must own that, singular as the performance was, there was an extremely limited amount of fancy expended on it.

Twilight now falling, lights were brought, and we were beginning to consult on the propriety of taking our departure, when the lady in lilac and silver returned and invited us to follow her into an adjoining room.

Not knowing why or wherefore, we obeyed, and were introduced into a small apartment, with a good deal of gilding and blazing with light, where a number of women were assembled, most of them

standing. At first, in the crowd and the sudden glare of light—for the outer-room, probably with design, was very dimly illuminated—I distinguished nothing in particular; but, on advancing a few steps, I suddenly became aware of what appeared to me at the first glance some glittering image or idol, seated in a corner of the room on a high triangular divan of state, covered with crimson satin embroidered in gold.

This was the bride.

Immediately gilt and satin-covered chairs were placed for us within a yard of the divan, and directly in front of it; and the invitation, "Shoof aroussa" (look at the bride), was given.

I have seldom experienced so singular an impression as that which seized me on obeying the injunction.

There she sat—a girl of sixteen, very beautiful, rich, in the full possession of her woman's charms—but no woman.

For the time being, she was simply the aroussa,—a show, a sight, a thing on which to hang gorgeous jewels, gold, glittering stuffs, feathers, embroidery—nothing more.

She sat upright, supported and surrounded by

cushions, her legs tucked or crossed under her, her hands folded on her lap, her eyes drooped. This position she never changed during the whole time—about an hour and a half—that we remained there. I shall never forget the cold, handsome, scornful, weary face I then gazed on, nor the suggestions it conveyed to me of the struggles between the external and internal life some of these women must undergo, before they settle down into the usual routine of the harem existence.

There was this young creature, passively and silently submitting to what to any woman must have been a frightful penance, physical as well as moral—submitting without a murmur expressed, while her face was one persistent protest against the enthrallment she was enduring, and which must have been inexpressibly painful, for her finely-cut closed lips were nearly colourless, and all her face was wan with the fatigues and constraint of her position, maintained daily during many consecutive hours.

Her dress consisted of a pale-yellow silk robe, stiff and heavy with gold embroidery. Her head-dress was a mass of diamonds; at one side of her head were two feathers—a pink and an azure; on

the other, falling on the neck, a dark-blue feather : while a sort of lappet, of some gold fabric, hung down on either shoulder.

Round her neck was a gorgeous necklace of pearls, emeralds, and diamonds, and, strange to say, on her chin, and on either cheek, diamonds were stuck in little clusters—I suppose with some paste or gum.

In addition to the innumerable lights in the room, there was placed on the floor, on either side of the bride, a brass candlestick, between three and four feet high, containing a huge candle with flowers painted on it. Cushions and mattresses were laid around, and on these the ladies, coming and going, sat and chatted, their attention divided between the bride and us ; while we stared, as it was evidently expected we should stare, at the unhappy aroussa, and discussed the fresh pipes and coffee that were brought. And now, by degrees, the tone of decorum that had hitherto prevailed began to relax. A third fat, shabby, elderly lady—the fattest we had yet seen—having imprudently squatted on the floor beside Mrs. R—, for the greater convenience of conversing and inspecting us and our dresses, finding it impos-

sible to get on her feet again by her own unassisted efforts, beckoned to one of her younger companions to aid her in the operation; who responded by seizing her ankle and dragging her forward, displaying in so doing a leg of curious proportions. Considerable mirth was excited by this sally; and the dame, who good-humouredly joined in the laugh, having been hoisted to her feet, a fourth fat, shabby lady took the place just vacated; and having called our attention afresh to the bride—who, but for the perpetual flashing glitter of gold and diamonds, caused by her respiration as the glare of light fell on her, showed no signs of life—she began to question my companion as to bridal customs and etiquette in England.

This old lady, who, in addition to being fat and shabby, was, as her subsequent conduct proved, so very jovial as to awaken a suspicion touching the use of stimulants, evidently considered that the answers indicated a very backward state of civilization. Did they sing at the wedding? she inquired, beginning herself one of the tuneless monotonous chants of which Eastern song consists. No. She tossed her chin with an air of

pitying contempt. Did they dance? and here, scrambling to her feet, she began a slow swaying, rhythmed movement, twisting her arms and her head in a manner that would have been graceful, had some twenty years been taken off the lady's age, and some four or five stone from her weight, accompanying the dance with a slow song (to which, however, she gave anything but a "slow" expression, in the slang acceptation of the word) and a clapping of the hands in time to the measure. And now, for the first and only time, did the bride indicate that she was a living woman, and not a deaf and dumb and blind and senseless image. At the first movement of the old lady, the shadow of a smile flickered over her fine set features and was gone; but when the dance and song actually commenced, the passive scorn of her face changed for an instant into an indignant sneer; up went the chin, still lower dropped the lids, and a little inarticulate sound, indicative of contemptuous impatience, escaped her lips; then again her face became rigid. Meanwhile, considerable sensation was produced in the harem by the conduct of the old lady; and though some laughed, it was evident from the demeanour of

the ladies in general, that they were greatly scandalized by the proceeding. But in vain. The dancer wavered and quavered on unheeding, addressing both dance and song especially to us, and, for the first time since my entrance into the harem, I began to acknowledge that there were cases where ignorance might be bliss; for there were evidently portions of the song so little suited to ears polite, that some of the women uttered exclamations of horror, and one or two covered their faces with their hands.

Presently, however, on the old dame's ceasing her movement and melody, and attempting to take a seat between us, apparently with the intention of enlightening our minds on the subject of the exhibition we had just witnessed, a tall handsome woman, whom we had not before perceived, with a resolute face, firm, richly-cut mouth, and splendid large bold eyes, came forward, pushed her away, and took the chair she was preparing to possess herself of. This lady, who was evidently an authority in the harem, and who was more like a good-looking young man than a woman, began, with a determined rapid enunciation very unusual in Eastern women, to talk to Mrs. R—, the old

lady meanwhile subsiding into silence and tranquillity.

Like all in the East, her talk consisted almost entirely of a series of questions, while she leaned forward with her elbows on her knees, scanning us with her handsome, insolent eyes, in a manner that was really disconcerting. I thought, as I looked at her, here was another to whom harem discipline could not always have come easy.

At last, feeling that we were beginning to have enough of this, and shrewdly conjecturing that the bride must be having a deal too much of it—once while we sat, one of the women had arranged the pillows the better to support her, she merely bending forward a little, in no way changing her position—we made a move to go; but the resolute lady and one or two others declared that we must positively stay to dine, and would take no refusal.

Curious to see a Turkish dinner, we consented, and after sitting a little while longer, the meal was announced and we were taken back to the first room.

The bride seemed no more cognisant of our departure than she had been of our arrival or of our presence, though I have little doubt she was

heartily glad to get rid of us. She was, I trust, soon released from her durance vile.

On entering the room where we were to dine, we were placed on chairs at the cotton-covered table, and at the same time an immense tray was brought in and laid upon it. In the centre was a huge turkey, dressed plain, though it looked too sodden to be roasted, and around were ranged little dishes of pickles, salt, sugar, and other condiments.

We had plates, and were moreover favoured with knives and forks, respecting the necessity of which Mrs. R — had overheard a quiet conversation while we had been in the bride's room. All the spoons were of *verre émail* or ivory, with rather flat bowls, and we had each a large *napkin*, worked at the ends with gold, and a small one, more like an embroidered pocket handkerchief. There was also Turkish bread, a sort of flat, soft, tough roll, cut into morsels, but not separated. Having taken our places before us, a slave grasped the wing-bone of the turkey, linked the joint very neatly with a knife, took off the wing, and then with her fingers tearing off long strips of the breast, put them on our plates. As we held it was to follow.

as far as might be, at Rome the customs of the Romans, we ate, and instantly another dish took the turkey's place, and then another and another, *ad infinitum*, with the most extraordinary rapidity.

What the dishes were, or of what they consisted, it was impossible to say ; and no order was observed as to the succession of meat and sweet dishes, the one replacing the other apparently at hazard. A tempting-looking white dish, we were told, was made of chicken, but on tasting it, it proved to be sweet and very sickly. It appeared to be considered a peculiar delicacy, and was composed of the white meat of chicken, cut up very small, brayed in a mortar, and then mixed up with a variety of other ingredients, sweet and perfumed.

One or two dishes were rather good ; but as, from their number and rapid succession, we could barely taste them (of some, indeed, we only took morsels on our plates which we pretended to eat for courtesy's sake), we carried away a highly confused idea of the component parts of the feast. At last, to our great relief, dessert and a huge glass bowl, not unlike a globe for gold-fish but more open at

the top, were brought in and we were invited to drink.

As neither glass, nor cup, nor any other convenience for drinking was supplied, we felt puzzled how to accede to the invitation, until large ivory and tortoiseshell spoons, or rather ladles, being produced, we were instructed to dip these into the bowl. This we did, and found the drink, which was clear and almost colourless, a sweet, mawkish, perfumed compound, in which were floating small slices of banana and little stoneless raisins or dried cherries. A very few sips were enough. We wound up with some morsels of apple, which the slave who chiefly served us had peeled and cut into little bits.

So singular and embarrassing a repast I never sat down to. The bold-eyed lady took her place beside me, and, quietly removing my bracelet—a chain with a diamond and enamelled locket—she, after examining it, folded her arms over the table and folded it in with them. On the other side, the old lady who had so distinguished herself in the dance and song, kept helping herself with her fingers from all the dishes, and as she had neither plate, spoon, nor napkin, the proceedings


were not pleasant to witness. Only these two sat; but round the table crowded innumerable women, evidently curious to behold the spectacle of Europeans at feeding-time.

All this while, my bracelet was in the hands of my determined-looking neighbour; and how it was to be got out of those hands was a question my friend and I debated in brief sentences while we ate. At last, seeing the locket peeping out of the closed palm, I ventured with the most insinuating smile I could command, to hold out my wrist, indicating the bracelet with my eye the while. But the lady was little disposed to surrender her prize so easily. She asked if there were hair in the locket, and on being answered in the negative, she calmly expressed a wish to have a lock of mine to put in it, and keep for a keepsake and tender souvenir! What excuse Mrs. R— gave for not acceding to this sentimental request I hardly know; but the result was that, with a very ill grace, the lady restored the bracelet, and a moment afterwards got up and walked away in extreme dudgeon.

Just as we were deliberating how to take our departure in a proper manner, a eunuch came to inform us that the gentleman who had accom-

panied us desired to know if we were ready to go home? The position having become very difficult indeed, we hailed the message with considerable satisfaction, and requested the messenger to inform one of the chief ladies that we wished to express our thanks for the hospitality we had received, and to make our adieu. Also, we begged him to get my shawl, which had been taken off my shoulders before we sat down to dinner, and which did not appear to be forthcoming. Dashing in among the women in most uncereemonious fashion, he presently returned with the shawl : then the lilac and silver lady and another lady came to receive our farewells, which being tendered and graciously received, we took our departure and rejoined our escort at the bottom of the stairs.

He, it appeared, had also dined, but not, as in our case, in solitary grandeur, but with several other guests ; among whom, happily, was a Frenchman of his acquaintance. He had also seen the bridegroom depart in state for the mosque. The boy looked, he told us, little older than any European lad of the same age. He was still in the hands of his tutor or governor, who had given him a week's holiday to be married in. After this



remarkable vacation, he was to return to his studies and usual mode of life, and the bride was to remain in the harem of her grandmother-in-law until her husband should be of age to set up an establishment and harem of his own.

This arrangement is common in the East, when there is any reason to desire that a girl shall be either secured or provided for; and superiority of age on the lady's side is considered a matter of no importance. One marriage of this kind was cited to me where the bridegroom was ten and the bride twenty-eight. As at that time of life, Eastern women already look old, the bride must have made rather a sorry figure when her husband came to years of discretion, and set up his harem.

It seems to be pretty generally understood now, that some of the more intelligent among the Turks are beginning to draw comparisons between their own customs, and the European system of treating women; and that these are unfavourable to the former, and that the women themselves are not always satisfied to accept their present lot.

Halim Pacha, brother to the Viceroy, said to a friend of mine, "Some of our women complain that we care little for them individually, and ask

why European husbands are content with one wife, to whom they can be fond and faithful. But how is it possible for us to attach ourselves seriously to one of our women? They have nothing to win respect and regard; they know nothing, they do nothing, they understand nothing, they think of nothing; they are mere children—utterly foolish, ignorant, and uncompanionable; we cannot *love* them in your sense of the word."

True, O Pacha! but whose fault is it? However, the first step towards remedying an evil is to become conscious of its existence; and this step is gained.

CHAPTER XV.

SHEPHERD'S.

Sir James Outram—Brown Again—Snake-charmers—Dinner
at Shepherd's—Buckle.

"SHEPHERD'S," that is to say, the hotel established some years since by an individual bearing that name, though I believe the present landlord is French or German, is so well known to Eastern travellers in general, and to Indian passengers in particular, that these will have nothing to learn by a description of it. As, however, a very large proportion of my readers have probably never been either Eastern travellers or Indian passengers, some notice of this "wayside inn," that forms the chief baiting-place between the Indies and Europe, may not be unacceptable. "Shepherd's," then, is a very large stuccoed house of no architectural pretensions, situated at the corner of the Esbekeesieh, but at the opposite side from the

fashionable promenade. In front is a flagged space of some extent, raised, with steps ascending at either side, and protected by a low parapet in front : and here sit in the sun (the season I speak of is winter, the end of January, remember) invalids and idlers who may be staying in the hotel or merely spending a day or two on their way elsewhere.

Daily might there be seen the venerable Sir James Outram, aged and infirm with suffering and past fatigues far more than with years, his head bent on his breast, while a racking cough at times shook him cruelly.

Mrs. R—, to whom he had brought an introduction, and with whose family and friends he was intimately acquainted, used most days to spend an hour or two with him, to relieve by talks of old times and old friends—which her twenty years knew rather by family tradition than by personal experience—the suffering monotony of the venerable soldier's weary life. Here, too, might be beheld—curious contrast!—an occasional specimen of Brown in his glory—Brown “doing” the East, and now and then the Easterns, as in the case of the donkey-boy already mentioned.

The season was January, the temperature about

that of September in England, with, certainly, a hotter sun in the middle of the day. But Brown is in the East, and Brown must make himself a spectacle for men and angels; so he buys yards of white muslin or calico and swathes his wide-awake about therewith; or he furnishes himself with a sort of vast white canvas helmet, with a peak before and a peak behind; and having thoroughly succeeded in making a show of himself and rejoicing in the happy consciousness of having done so, he struts and swaggers in front of "Shepherd's," and feels that he is, and there is none beside him. Indian officers too, among whom a vast consumption of bitter beer and brandy is carried on, are plentiful; and pale women, and paler weedy-looking children, and a few young girls, all blanched and wan, contrasting sadly with the fresh blooming maidens on their way out. Only one thinks how will it be with each a year or two hence?

There is also a good sprinkling of foreigners, and adventurers and adventuresses are not wanting; and great is the confusion of tongues, and Brown's is about the loudest, and, be sure, the most complaining.

In front of Shepherd's, as may be supposed, collect beggars, and jugglers, and tumblers, and dancers, and musicians; and here I saw a snake-charmer, with a hideous cobra and a dismal, forlorn-looking ape, whose life seemed to be rendered miserable by daily contact with the horrible reptile, of which he was evidently much afraid. The Arab took the snake out of his box and began to play on a little pipe, upon which the creature, rearing itself from its middle and swelling its neck, began a sort of undulating dance very uncanny to behold. Every now and then the man would endeavour to force the wretched ape to approach the snake, which would make a furious dart at him, to his extreme discomfiture.

I do not know whether the venomous fangs of this creature had been extracted; but it is positive that certain Arabs possess some secret to render them innocuous, even when such is not the case. Mr. R— told me that a friend of his had a collection of serpents, all highly venomous. The cage in which they were kept requiring to be cleaned, and neither he nor any of his servants feeling disposed to perform the delicate task, a snake-charmer was sent for, who without the slightest hesitation put

his hand into the cage, drew out the serpents one by one, put them in a bag he had brought with him, cleaned the cage, and quietly replaced them. It is supposed that some herb or other substance that acts powerfully on the nerves of the snakes is employed by these men; but they keep their secret, like the Irish whisperers.

Some Alexandrian friends of ours coming to spend a few days at Cairo during our stay, and putting up at Shepherd's, asked us one day to dine there at the table-d'hôte, to see "the humours" thereof. It was a day when the Indian homeward passengers were passing through, and the vast dining-room, with its rows and rows of tables, was at its fullest. Great was the noise, great the heat, considerable the confusion; but as our hosts were especially well-known and well-cared for at Shepherd's, we got an end of a table in the quietest part of the room, so that we—a party of seven or eight—could cluster together round this end, instead of being separated or ranged in a single row. The dinner was reasonably good, though not very hot, the company, as may be supposed, a strange medley; but the size of the room and the vast number of the

guests gave you only a general *coup-d'œil*, and not much that was amusing in detail.

After dinner, the evening being delightfully mild, a great number of the guests, ourselves among the number, adjourned to the space in front of the house, where we sat till about eleven, and then walked home by moonlight across the now still and deserted Esbekeeh.

At Cairo we had the good fortune to fall in with one whose premature death a few weeks later now makes the souvenir of the encounter doubly interesting. This was Buckle, who, in his researches for fresh materials for his *History of Civilization*, was now on his way back from a journey up the Nile. He had, on his arrival in Egypt, brought letters of introduction to the R—'s, so that as they were already acquainted he came almost immediately to call, and was asked to dinner on an early day.

I have known most of the celebrated talkers of—I will not say how many years back—of the time, in a word, when Sydney Smith rejoiced in his green bright old age, and Luttrell, and Rogers, and Tommy Moore were still capable of giving forth an occasional flash, and when the venerable

Lord Brougham, and yet more venerable Lord Lyndhurst, delighted in friendly and brilliant sparring at dinner-tables, whose hosts are now in their half-forgotten graves. I have known some brilliant talkers in Paris—Lamartine, and Dumas, and Cabarrus, and brightest, or at least most constantly bright of all, the late Madame Emile de Girardin. I knew Douglas Jerrold; and I am still happy enough to claim acquaintance with certain men and women whose names, though well known, it were perhaps invidious now to mention. But for inexhaustibility, versatility, memory, and self-confidence, I never met any to compete with Buckle. Talking was meat, and drink, and sleep to him: he lived upon talk. He could keep pace with any given number of interlocutors on any given number of subjects, from the abstrusest point on the abstrusest science to the lightest *jeu d'esprit*, and talk them all down, and be quite ready to start fresh. Among the hundred and one anecdotes with which he entertained us I may be permitted to give, say the hundred and first. "Wordsworth," said Charles Lamb, "one day told me that he considered Shakespeare greatly over-rated. 'There is an immensity of trick in all

Shakespeare wrote,' he said, 'and people are taken in by it. Now if *I* had a mind I could write exactly like Shakespeare.' So you see," proceeded Charles Lamb, quietly, "it was *only the mind* that was wanting!" We met Buckle on several subsequent occasions, and his talk and his spirits never flagged; the same untiring energy marked all he said, and did, and thought, and fatigue and depression appeared to be things unknown to him.

I never saw a man whose sudden and premature death it was so difficult to realize; his hold on life, and his enjoyment of it, seemed so strong: he had done so much, and had in him the power and the matter to do so much more, that the hearing of his sudden cutting off in the prime of life and vigour by a local fever in the Eastern land whose history he was ransacking for further materials for his gigantic undertaking, appeared a thing hardly possible, an ending altogether too inadequate to such an intellect and such a career.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN EASTERN SAVANT.

An Eastern Tea-party—Eastern and Northern—Eastern and Western—A Tug of War—Museum of Boolak.

WE were one evening invited to the house of a Cairene, who, we were told, was regarded as the most learned and scientific man in Egypt. Heke-
kian Bey was an Armenian. He had been chiefly educated in Europe, and spoke English perfectly, and, I believe, French and Italian as well. For some years he had devoted his attention almost exclusively to the origin, intention, uses, and history of the Pyramids, the Nilometer, and other antiquities of Egypt. On most of these points he had formed theories of his own, and had written these in the clearest manuscript in excellent English; but whether the matter of these treatises was equal to the manner, or what value there was in the theories themselves, I beg leave to declare

myself incompetent to decide, seeing that the subject of a MS. must be singularly tempting to induce me to attempt its perusal ; and that had I gone through it, I should probably, judging from a glance over its pages, have found myself plunged so deep in scientific mazes that inextricable confusion would have been the result.

Anent the *soirée*, however. We went about eight o'clock to the Bey's house in the *Esbekeëieh*, and passing through a court-yard and up a broad flight of stone stairs, were ushered into the sitting-room. It was of moderate size, very scantily furnished, with hardly any chairs, and the cushioned *divan*, common to all Eastern houses, running round three sides of the room. Most of the guests had already arrived—it was merely a friendly reception, and these were few,—and we were introduced in due form to the hostess. She was a lady of middle age, dressed in Turkish costume, and speaking no European language, so that conversation was necessarily limited in that direction. She however received us very graciously, and we were placed on the *divan*, and offered tea, cakes, and *chibouks*, by three or four slave boys. Some of the guests were European, some Eastern,

and some American. Among the latter was Mr. Thayer, the American consul-general, our friend and opposite neighbour at Alexandria : all the rest were strangers to us, so of course we immediately fraternized with him, and he, having been for some time acquainted with Hekekian Bey, and, to a considerable extent, versed in his theories on the Pyramids, and his acquirements in general, put us *au courant* of these as far as the occasion would permit.

Hekekian Bey being extremely desirous to meet Buckle, and compare his views on his favourite topics with those of the historian of Civilization, Mr. Thayer (who had been one of the guests at the dinner given by the R—'s to the latter) proposed that we should all dine with him to meet Buckle, at the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs, where he was staying. The invitation was accepted, and the day fixed at once, of course subject to Buckle's being able to join the party.

I cannot say that our soirée was a very brilliant one, but there was much in it that was new to me; and it was curious to witness how impossible it was for the Oriental and the European and American elements to conjoin :—in spite of vari-

ous attempts made both by themselves and by their host, to bring them together, they could not mingle, each fell back into his own circle, and so it continued through the whole evening. This remark and those that follow, I must distinctly state do not apply to Hekekian Bey, who was a Christian, and a man of learning.

I can hardly understand, from my own observation and experience of the Oriental character, a friendship—in the only true conditions of friendship, confidence and equality—existing between an Eastern, and, at all events, a Northern European. This does not arise so much, by any means, from antipathy or personal dislike between the two—they often live on very good terms together—as from the utter and total divergence of their views on all points, beginning with that of religion (though till I went to Egypt I was not aware how much less Islamism in its doctrines—I say nothing of its practice—differed, except in the one vital point of Christianity, from some of our tenets, than is commonly supposed*) and descending to the

* It is not, I fancy, generally known that the Mahommedans accept the whole of the Old Testament; that they believe in the existence and profoundly respect the character

merest details of every-day life. Truly it reminds one of the parable of patching the old garment with the new stuff, putting the new wine into old bottles; attempt to accomplish the amalgamation and the rent is made worse, the bottles give way; but here the resemblance ceases; the bottles and the garment alone are they which suffer.

Between the Oriental and the North American, the divergence would, of course, be yet more entire, the principles which form the starting point of the two being as wide apart as the cardinal points they inhabit. The *go-aheadism* of the Yankee, his restless activity, his perfect confidence in himself and his own resources,—greatly exaggerated, as late events prove them to be,—his belief that he can do anything and all things by the force and

of our Saviour, and regard him as the next greatest prophet to Mahommed. Their theory is, I believe, that religion has been carried on, as it were, by a series of great prophets, each advancing the cause by his efforts and inspiration. These have been Abraham, Moses, Christ, and lastly Mahommed, whom they regard as the real Messiah. Women also—a few of them only, but still the admission of these few acknowledges the principle of their possessing souls—can, contrary to common belief, attain to Paradise. Houris are a sort of angels already existing there, but not as the substitutes for, and to the exclusion of, women.

energy that are in him, are as abhorrent to the Eastern as the latter's immutability, his indolence, and his fatalism are to the Western ; and years can but increase the vastness of the abyss that divides them.

Hekekian Bey approached nearer in ideas, habits, and manners to a European than any Eastern I have ever seen. Generally speaking, the Oriental educated in Europe only takes an external and temporary colouring from what he sees and learns. On the surface he may have some gloss of civilization, but at heart he is as completely a child of the East as if he had never left it ; and, generally speaking, all that he brings back to his land, *especially* when brought up in France, are the vices and immoralities, not the virtues, the energies, nor the learning of that he leaves behind. These he grafts on the defects native to his race ; and it may be supposed how nearly again another parable, that of the devil who took unto himself seven spirits more wicked than himself, is realized.

In due time the day of Mr. Thayer's dinner arrived, and we sat down, a party of eight, to an excellently cooked and served repast. The meal

concluded, the decks were cleared for action, and Hekekian Bey and Buckle fell to the discussion of the former's theories, from thence diverging to a variety of other topics more or less connected therewith. But the match was that of one who slowly, laboriously, alone, on incomplete evidence, *without contradiction*, and consequently without consciousness of weakness or error, has passed years of a life in building up an edifice of ideas, with an antagonist whose vast natural powers have been strengthened, sharpened, brightened by contact with the world, its best books, and its best men, intellectually speaking; who has run the gauntlet of public opinion; whose perceptions are so keen that no weak point escapes him; whose memory is so powerful that he forgets nothing that can in any way elucidate the subject in hand; whose learning is so universal that he can bring to bear on the point all sorts of unimagined lights; whose reasoning is so clear and logical, and whose command of language so absolute, that, taking a wholly different view of nearly all the matters under discussion from that supported by his opponent, it may be supposed how brief and uneven was the contest.

A few days later, Hekekian Bey and Mr. Thayer, escorted Mrs. R— and myself to the Museum at Boolak and thence to Old Cairo, which is between two or three miles from the present city.

The Museum contains a number of highly valuable and interesting specimens of Egyptian antiquities in gold, silver, bronze, enamel, and stone; besides some very remarkable mummies, mummy-cases, sarcophagi, and statues, most of the latter in black basalt, hard as iron and in wonderful preservation. I saw there also the splendid collection, afterwards exhibited in the International Exhibition, of the jewels and ornaments taken from the tomb of the Egyptian queen Aah Hotep, who died 18 B.C.

CHAPTER XVII.

OLD CAIRO.

Chapel of the Virgin—Mosque of Amer—The Gate of Paradise—Tombs of the Memlooks—The Author as a Show—Antique Carved Stone.

FROM the Museum we proceeded to Old Cairo. Our first visit was to the City of the Dead, an ancient and modern cemetery of a kind surely unique in the world. Quitting the carriage, we passed through a yard, and then plunged into a labyrinth of narrow, dim, winding passages, pierced as it were among high walls—walls of tombs. But here and there, in mere dens formed in the basements of the tombs themselves, were established living inmates, whole Arab families, with miserable filthy children, looking as though—which was probably in a great degree the case—they had never seen the sunshine. These, Hekekian Bey told us,

are for the most part, the guardians, or supposed guardians, of the tombs; but as the Arab of the cities will lodge in any place where he can get a roof and four walls to shelter him, no doubt most of these dwellers in the tombs are mere vagrants, who have come there and established themselves where such shelter was to be found.

They stared at us, but, contrary to all Arab usage, refrained from begging: whether it was their isolated existence,—as, from what I have heard of Mahomedanism, I should imagine their close contact with the dead rendered them in a manner pariahs and outcasts,—that kept them uninitiated in this very troublesome custom, I do not know, but such was the fact, and was, as far as I remember, the sole instance of such forbearance.

Wandering for a considerable distance through these blind alleys, we at last obtained the attendance of the guide appointed to take charge of the great curiosity of the place, the chapel and retreat of the Virgin. Passing into a little den, like a cellar, we were told that this was where she had remained concealed during the Christian persecutions in the city. A door led into what is called her chapel; it is small, but in some parts not il-

decorated, and has a good many curious Byzantine pictures, heads of the Holy Family and Saints, on the usual gold ground.

This chapel, however, is comparatively modern, and stands on the top of the old one, to which you descend, each person carrying a little taper or rush-light, through a trap-door in the floor of the upper building. It is built of solid masonry, of a sort of whitish stone, and is in pretty good preservation; which is the more remarkable, for during the rise of the Nile it is flooded to a depth of about two feet, and being entirely underground and unventilated, must necessarily remain damp the greater part, if not the whole of the year.

A deep basin of hewn stone, probably, I should think, a baptismal font, is shown as being the vessel in which the Virgin and St. Joseph bathed the infant Saviour. I leave the reader to make what he can out of the historical part of this combination of statements. What greatly adds to the interest of this and the surrounding buildings and tombs, is the fact that they stand where stood Babylon the Great.

Emerging once more into sunshine, we proceeded to view the mosque of Amer. Omer, of

the Mahomedan or Caliph dynasty, in the seventh century conquered Egypt, and on this occasion took place the destruction of a vast portion of ancient Alexandria, and especially of the world-famed Alexandrian library, the burning of whose books (as Wilkinson tells us) heated for six months the 4,000 baths of the city. Amer ebn el As was his chief lieutenant, and the founder of the first mosque built in Egypt, about the year 638, at Fostát, on the ruins of Babylon.

Without the precincts of the mosque is one of the potteries for the manufacture of the porous goollahs and other rude earthen vessels employed by the lower order of Arabs. Through this we had to pass amid a throng of Arab women and children, many of the latter covered with sores, which the flies would settle on, and fearfully afflicted with ophthalmia, but none the less active and curious and clamorous for backsheesh—pressing on us, and even seizing hold of our garments in a way anything but agreeable. Heaped on the ground were whole piles of little vases and pots of every imaginable shape, in red and grey clay, and toys, rude imitations of dogs, and of the old classical-shaped lamps, which we found were meant for

whistles, having, the former holes at the mouth, the latter at the spout, which being blown into answered the purpose capitally. Of these we bought for a few paras, amounting to the sum, I think, of about sevenpence, as many as Mr. Thayer's dragoman could well carry..

The mosque is enclosed in a large walled space. Near the entrance are two pillars, part of a ruin, standing on the same pedestal. It is a test of Mahomedan piety to be able (at the end of Rhamadan, I believe) to pass between these pillars ; but I should think that even then none but the slender Arab or emaciated young Turk would venture on the experiment. Decidedly none of our jolly old friends at the bazaars would have the slightest chance of making their way to Paradise, if this were really the gate by which to enter in. The pillars, up to the height of a man's head, are worn perfectly smooth and polished in the narrow space ; and perhaps in a few more generations, the efforts of preceding ones may have done something towards rendering the passage to bliss easier to their descendants.

The mosque, open at one side, is in wonderful preservation. It has little or no attempt at archi-

tectural design or ornament, but is more like a large bare barn with a pulpit and a singing-loft in it than anything else, and nothing in the general appearance of the building gives to an unlearned eye the slightest idea of antiquity. Indeed, so little does there appear in it anything of solidity or durability, that the marvel of its being still standing at all, after a lapse of twelve hundred years, is what perhaps first strikes the visitor.

Nothing but that pure desert air, dry and light and untainted—nothing but that glorious Egyptian sun, golden and unobscured by fog and vapour—could work such miracles.

Returning home we passed by a monastery of considerable antiquity. The encompassing walls, which were all we could see, were of enormous height and evidently of great thickness, and told tales, not merely of the desire of those within to keep their souls safe from the spiritual assaults of the outer world, but of their necessity to protect themselves against its more material aggressions on their bodies. The rest of the way lay between fields of sugar-canes, gracefully waving their lofty plumed reeds high in the air, between buildings

old and comparatively new ; potteries, and avenues of stately lebbecks, shading the road.

Decidedly of the monuments of Egypt's ancient splendour, the best preserved are the tombs of the Caliphs, commonly so called, though the tombs of the Memlooks would be the proper denomination. True they are of much later date than those I have been describing.

They were erected by the kings of the Circassian or Borgita dynasty, who reigned from 1382 to 1496, when they were displaced by the invasion of Sultan Seleem. The chief are those of Qaïtbay, Berqooq, and Ghooree.

We drove through a great part of the city, and suddenly emerging on the desert, here all undulated with little sand-hills, we came in sight of those most exquisite specimens of Oriental architecture. Each of the tombs is the site of a mosque, so that the burying-place of these slave-kings—"Memlook" signifying white slave, which these monarchs originally were—is, or was a city of palaces.

All the buildings are in layers of red and white brick, all have the domes and minarets essential to the mosque, but so infinitely varied are they in plan and in ornamentation, that they are entirely

free from monotony. To attempt to give any detailed account of these exquisite buildings after one brief visit, which, to my very great regret, was all I was able to pay to them, were simply impossible; and as I have striven in these pictures as far as practicable to paint in the best words I could find only what I was able myself to observe, accurately seize, and vividly remember, I can do no more now than attempt to give my readers something of my own impression of these glorious palace-tombs.

Imagine, then, a vast undulating plain of sand, warm-tinted by a glowing sky and a sunshine which we in the North cannot even picture. Imagine further, loosely grouped, if such an expression be permitted, broad-based buildings, streaked rich red and creamy white beneath this sunlight, with infinite angles, salient parts and recesses, in which sun and shade richly alternate. Above rises, to crown each, one or perhaps two domes, vast, yet perfect in proportion, covered with traceries of the most exquisite patterns, like embroidery, while beside them upspring the lovely shafts of the minarets, light, bright, *svelte*, and airy, showing their beauteous lines and fairy decorations against the full blue of the stainless sky.

Some of these mosques are very perfect within as well as without, and have preserved with little injury the lace-like tracery of their windows, the inscriptions on their walls, and the rich and varied patterns of their black and white marble pavements. Others are much dilapidated, more within generally than without. The largest, which has two splendid domes, is built round a yard, which has in the centre a sunken oblong space, intended, I suppose, to contain the water of a fountain.

It is still possible to climb the steep stone stairs of one of the minarets; and all the party, myself alone excepted, essayed the very fatiguing and in some degree dangerous undertaking. Being unable to try such experiments, I seated myself on the bottom step to wait their return,—alone, as I thought, but fate had otherwise decreed it. A group of Arab women, girls and children, the latter bearing the usual curiously small proportion to the former, who had followed us at a little distance, soon entered the tower, and finding this a good opportunity of studying closely and without interruption, the aspect, costume, and general appearance of a European *sittah*, down they all squatted immediately opposite to me, scanning every minute

detail of my person and attire, and discussing them and me as if I were some strange beast or inanimate object. My gloves, I could observe, were what chiefly struck them in my dress; these were gazed upon long and curiously, and evidently formed the subject of much comment and conjecture.

I hardly know why, but under this scrutiny I felt nothing whatever of embarrassment or awkwardness in the position. I suppose that to the fact of their regarding me as an unknown animal or curious piece of still life, and manifesting no appearance of consciousness under the gaze with which I in return contemplated them, may this be attributable. They none of them wore veils, and the corner of the mantle with which in the presence of men they make a feint to hide their faces was dropped, so that I, in my turn, could, at my leisure, study their features. Though nearly all young, not one had a trace of good looks. In all were the short, ill-shaped faces, depressed noses, coarse mouths, and long half-closed eyes peculiar to the Egyptian Arab; and their graceful limbs and lithe figures being wholly concealed as they crouched or squatted in anything but picturesque attitudes on the ground, a less lovely

type of humanity than they presented I have seldom seen.

Hearing the rest of the party descending the stairs, they rose and retreated into the yard with some precipitation, evidently thinking that when the curious animal came to be joined by the rest of the herd, such close quarters were no longer safe.

On leaving this mosque I noticed an interesting thing : the step that led to the outer entrance bore, faint and worn, but still easily traceable along its entire length, one of the angular profile figures carved on all the oldest Egyptian monuments.

This ruin, therefore, and probably many of the others, was partly composed from the materials of ruins of far greater antiquity ; and this single stone, with its rude figure, had survived both, and might well survive a third edifice, to tell in mysterious and disputable language its tale of that remote past, whose secrets fresh discoveries seem, instead of revealing, rather to envelop in deeper uncertainty.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOWLING DERVISHES.

The Sect.—The Entrée—The Especially Devout—Persian Dervishes—The Commencement—The Howling—The Sortie.

I HAD heard much of the dancing and howling Dervishes since my arrival in Egypt, and desired much to see them; but it seemed there were some difficulties attendant on the satisfaction of such curiosity, particularly as regarded women.

Mr. Thayer, however, assured us that if we intrusted ourselves to his care, he would undertake to “see us well through it;” and the day being ascertained when the next meeting of the holy men should take place, we agreed to witness it under the shadow of his consular ægis.

Mrs. R—, however, being in delicate health, and conceiving that the spectacle might not be one calculated to soothe her nerves, I went with Mr.

Thayer and Mr. Hale, a friend who was passing the winter with him.

We drove to the building—the Dervishes' college, I believe, it is called—where the members of the sect at various times assemble, not only for the religious meetings, such as we were about to witness, but on all occasions when it is desirable that they should take counsel together; in short, it is a general rendezvous for the brethren from all parts of the East.

The Dervishes, be it known to thee, O reader! are a religious sect, professing Mohammedanism, but adding thereto certain rules and observances not usually practised by the ordinary Faithful. They are found all over the East, and especially, I understand, in Persia; and men of all ranks and callings are eligible to adopt their form of worship, which, as the reader will shortly perceive, is, to say the least, extremely peculiar.

They have their priests and their laymen; they have all a sort of masonic bond of union; and they are held in much consideration for their piety, which is very decidedly a pagan version of our "muscular Christianity," greatly extended.

A drive of some two or three miles out of the city brought us to the place of meeting, and, alighting from the carriage, we entered by a narrow gateway the court of the building.

It was of some extent, shaded with two or three fine trees, beneath which were placed benches, and on these and on the ground were seated the worshippers, many of them wild, unkempt, travel-stained men, who gazed upon us with a sort of mistrustful curiosity. Seats were offered us, with great politeness, and coffee (these attentions, I take it, being, without impeachment to Eastern hospitality, due in a great measure to the appearance of the kawass,* with the consular staff, a badge highly regarded in the East), and we waited till all things should be ready for the commencement of the ceremonies. A little knot of Europeans—Indian passengers they seemed—were there before us; and in a few minutes we perceived Buckle, accompanied by his two young fellow-voyagers, boys of some twelve or fourteen years, the sons of a friend, whom he had taken charge of for this Eastern tour.

He joined our party, and we talked for about a

* An official attendant.

quarter of an hour, while fresh arrivals of Dervishes were taking place.

At last, the body being, as I suppose, *au complet*, there was a general movement towards the low door of the mosque, where the religious exercises were to be gone through. In the porch all such as had slippers—some were already barefooted—left them; and we, cognisant of the prohibition to touch the sacred floor with the sole of the shoe, wrapped our feet up in handkerchiefs with which we had provided ourselves for the purpose—this concession to their creed being accepted by all Mahommedans at the entrance of their mosques by the giaour. At that of Mohammed Ali, the show-mosque of Cairo, erected at the tomb of the old Lion of Egypt, men squat at the door, and earn a few piastres by shoeing visitors with soft cloth slippers they keep for the purpose.

Waiting till the rush of Dervishes had passed into the building, we followed and took the seats that were provided for us at one side, having the worshippers in front of us.

There might have been, I suppose, some forty Dervishes assembled. They were of all ages, from

old men to mere lads; of all colours, from the blackest Nubians to men of the lightest tint Orientals ever assume; and of a variety of nations and callings, though all, to judge by their dress and appearance, were of the lower ranks. Some—these were the specially holy ones—had no occupation, no home, no possessions of any kind. They lived by alms, and what refuse they could secure from the dogs, the kites, and the asses, and they slept in street-corners, by the wayside, or on the desert sands. These men *may* have been impostors, but they had not the aspect of such; and what the imposture brought them, beyond the privilege of being idle, was not apparent. Very strange, and wild, and uncouth was their presence; bare-limbed and bare-breasted, covered only with a single filthy garment, that seemed made of sack-cloth. Some of them—these, I was told, were Persians—had, contrary to all my previous experience of Orientals, their heads uncovered, and displayed wild, unkempt masses of hair, heaped in tangles on their heads, hanging shaggily over their faces, mingling with their unshorn beards, and falling sometimes as low as their waists. Most of these had, I observed, a peculiar cast of physiog-

nomny, very striking, but hard to render into words. A sort of dogged yet vague determination to some half-defined purpose. A gloomy abstraction, an aspect as if the man were half-crazed—dazed—by an unwholesome devotion of all his faculties to brooding over some intangible and unreal phantasms of a brain become disordered by unhealthy exercise; a seeming blindness and deadness to all that was passing in the world around. What followed gave a clue that went far to make this appearance easily comprehensible.

The mosque of the Dervishes was merely a bare chamber, with stone floor and white-washed walls. It had, I think, the usual pulpit; but of this I am not certain. Against the wall, opposite to where we sat, were hung a few simple instruments of music—the tarabooka, tambourines without bells, and one or two pipes or reeds.

A mat being spread on the floor, on which two or three of the priests stood or crouched, the worshippers collected in a half circle, and squatted on their haunches. At a signal from one of the priests, they all commenced a low monotonous guttural chant, "La illáh-il'-Alláh, la illáh-il'-Alláh, la illáh-il'-Alláh," rocking their bodies and

bowing their heads in rhythmical measure, the priest going round and seeming to beat time and to encourage the devotees, who, as they warmed to the work, gave added loudness, depth, and emphasis to their chant.

Presently, at another signal, they all rose; and now some might be seen preparing for the coming struggle by stripping off all but their inner garments, and throwing the vestments they cast off into the centre of the circle. Then they all took hands, and began rocking and bowing with greater energy, but in silence, while a priest repeated some prayers, and ever and anon advanced to the line of worshippers, seeming to excite them to greater manifestations of religious zeal. And not in vain. By degrees the motions increased,—especially in certain individuals,—the long-haired Persians and a tall, lean, old jet-black Nubian with grizzled hair, being particularly conspicuous,—until one of the Persians suddenly uttered a sound I can only describe as a gnashing howl, like the quick fierce cry of a wild beast. What followed was a mere frenzy.

Up and down went the heads and bodies, the foreheads nearly touching the knees in front, the

backs of the heads flung behind to the extremest angle it was possible for the body to attain without losing its balance, while the shaggy manes of the Persians were tossed to and fro in a continuous stream; the sweat poured down their limbs, their movements became an agony of galvanic throes, their howls—for they all howled by this time—deep, hollow, unearthly convulsions, more savage, and at the same time more expressive of suffering than any sound I remember. Meanwhile the priests moved to and fro, striking the tarabooka and tambourines, and one now and then gave a few notes on a little pipe, clear, soft, wailing sounds, like the notes of an Eolian harp, curiously plaintive and touching.

How the old black man stood it was a marvel. His worn body and attenuated limbs seemed moved by a power beyond his control, his eyes glared, his face, shining with sweat, became distorted, his howls were like the roars of a dying lion; yet still he swung, still his tortured black face and woolly grey head came upwards alternately.

Now and then one of those who seemed newest at the work, would fall out of the rank, drop on

the matting, and lie gasping and panting for a while, then scramble up again, stagger back into the line which opened to receive him, and resume his rocking; but not one gave in altogether.

This lasted for, I suppose, about three quarters of an hour: then there was a pause; and then those who had cast aside their garments, sought them out from the heap where they lay, and resumed them. We went out, and stopped by the doorway to see them pass.

I would not have been in their path for something. Forth they came, pouring in a blind, staggering mass, their eyes full of the sombre suffering fury of baited bulls, their jaws apart, their faces drawn and haggard, and streaming with perspiration, their whole aspect that of creatures hunted into a stupefaction of rage, terror, and exhaustion. Truly if it could be any satisfaction to Allah and to the manes of the Prophet, that their worship should have the effect of reducing their devotees to the condition of baited beasts, they must have been satisfied.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CITADEL AND SHOUBRA.

View from the Citadel—Mohammed Ali's Mosque—Shoubra
—Shoubra Gardens — Grand Kiosk — Flamingoes — The
Small Kiosk.

OF the modern buildings of Cairo the Citadel (where is situated the Mosque of Mohammed Ali) is the most important.

Its position is singularly commanding, and from it you have the most complete view of Cairo. It was a dull day when I saw it, and a more impressive view—impressive from the flat, colourless, shadeless, dead immensity it presented—I have never seen.

Standing by the parapet* I looked down and

* At the famous *coup de main*, by which Mohammed Ali has gotten himself much honour and glory in the East, namely the massacre of the Memlooks, who threatening to become dangerously powerful, he invited to a banquet at the Citadel and then slew *en masse*, one escaped by leaping his horse over the parapet down on the city below. By a miracle he escaped with little injury, and afterwards became great friends with his intended assassin.

around. Below lay the city. From here dome and minaret, garden and palm-grove, were merged in the general aspect, and I saw spread out a vast flat area, covered within a certain radius by low, level-roofed buildings.

All presented one colour: earth, houses,—everything which the eye embraced—there was nothing to *catch* it, nothing on which it could *rest*—was of one low, dull, flat tint,—dust to dust, truly. No shadow, no relief, consequently no life and no movement; a vast, soulless, dead city, whose dust and whose dry bones could never live again, and seemed content to crumble down into the desert sands, and become one with them. Beyond and around, without any appearance of boundary outline to the city, spread the Desert, still continuing the same tint; slowly through the sands crept “Old Nile,” sluggish and dim, with his thick, oozy current, that had barely life and energy left to pursue its crawling course.

And on the low horizon dimly loomed, unspeakably solemn and mysterious in their vast, still indistinctness, the broad-based giants, the PYRAMIDS.

I never saw them nearer, though I had other

views of them. I never saw the Sphinx! Ah, me! it was cruel to be at Cairo, to behold them far away, now wrapped in haze, now blazing in red sunshine,—to touch them, as it were, with the eye, and yet to be separated from them by my own infirmity, which rendered the day's excursion on donkey-back a labour I dared not encounter.

And yet, whatever I may have lost myself, my readers, I think, will lose but little by the enforced omission,—these very wonders being those, probably, the most studied and the oftenest described by every traveller who has visited, spoken, or written on Egypt.

Turning from the oppressively impressive view with a sense of dull pain, I joined the rest of the party, and we went to visit the Mosque of Mohammed Ali. It was very large, very magnificent, gorgeously decorated, and in all things “got up regardless of expense.” But it was too new, too complete, too modern, to suit the tone of mind Cairo engenders, and it failed to interest or impress me as I suppose it ought to have done. Five minutes before I had been looking at the Pyramids, dim through haze, and perhaps through tears!

Our next excursion was a visit to Shoubra, one of the viceregal palaces, and then the residence of Hamil Pacha, brother to the Viceroy, who was, however, for the moment, absent on a gazelle-hunting expedition in the Desert.

Shoubra is about three miles from Cairo, and is situated on the banks of the Nile. The Shoubra road is like a French main-road, paved, and bordered with large trees, chiefly lebbeck and cypresses,—and at either side are the villas and gardens of the wealthy residents of Cairo; fields of beerseem, and shayeer (which is in such a hurry to get into ear that the straw only grows about eight or ten inches high), and groves of orange, olive, gum-arabic, and fig-trees.

Mr. R— being well known to Halim Pacha's people as intimate with their master, we entered without difficulty, and wandered about at will; the latter privilege being a rare one, such visitors as are usually admitted being attended by a guardian, and allowed a very limited range. This was the first Eastern garden of great extent and magnificence I had had an opportunity of seeing.

It was indifferently laid out, being all intersected with broad, straight, sanded walks; but the splen-

dour of the vegetation, here heightened by the great facilities for irrigation given by the immediate vicinity of the Nile, the rarity of its trees, shrubs, and flowers, though the time of year was unfavourable to any display of the latter, and its wide extent, made it delightful. Everywhere you passed between low myrtle hedges, through groves of orange-trees, the ripe fruit hanging on the boughs or lying golden in ungathered wealth on the ground.

Here were trees—real *trees*—of roses and jasmín, thick-stemmed, tall and spreading as our mays; the former was the pale lemon-tinted tea or noisette rose, growing in vast clusters of bud and blossom that weighed down the boughs; but even then it required a hooked stick to draw them within reach of a tall man's hand. Luckily, Mr. R— was a tall man, and I had some roses. The jasmins grew in the same vigorous, self-sustained fashion, with great white stars and crimson buds, sunstained on the outside, as we see some of our honeysuckles, but more deeply.

How can I tell the hundred other lovely trees and shrubs that grew there? the wealth of exotic vegetable life, the luxuriance that the combina-

tion of that glowing Eastern sun above, that rich Eastern ooze below produces; the effect of a climate that, knowing no frost, no snow, no bleak winds, permits vegetation to advance unchecked through all the circle of the seasons?

And glancing through the foliage, and amid the tree-stems, appeared the little pearl-white cranes that dot all the fields about, but are nowhere so tame and easily approached as here, where they roam and build and breed without disturbance.

After wandering about for some time, we proceeded to view the Grand Kiosk. Ascending a vast flight of steps and crossing an open colonnade that runs round the building, we were admitted by an attendant, of whom there were several about, into the inner circle.

Inexpressibly bright and beautiful, Oriental as a dream engendered by reading the "Arabian Nights," glittering as a fairy palace, was the *coup d'œil* of that summer retreat.

The building was oblong. In the centre, open to the sky, living water danced and rippled laughingly, and all round was a broad, cool colonnade of marble, on whose ceiling danced, and

rippled, and laughed again golden reflections of the water, giving a light more warm, more limpid, more joyous than any words can describe, which the intense blue of the vault of heaven softened and hallowed. Marble balustrades, on which were placed at intervals vases of flowers, bordered the water, and at each corner was built a pavilion.

Into those pavilions, shut to general visitors, we were admitted.

They were all splendidly decorated and furnished, but in an incongruous, semi-Oriental, semi-European fashion that made them unsatisfactory. One was a billiard-room, and was hung round with bad pictures of the members of the viceregal family. Another was a reception-room, with splendid inlaid cabinets, and gold and silk brocade divans all round it, and having the finest marqueterie floor I ever saw. The others were a sort of boudoirs or lounging and smoking-rooms, and each had in the centre on a round table an immense modern Sèvres vase, a gift from the Emperor of the French to the Pacha of Egypt.

This was a favourite retreat of Mohammed Ali, whose delight it was at one time to have on

moonlight summer nights light boats scattered about on the surface of the rippling water, which is floored with stone, and only about three feet deep, and to make the ladies of his hareem, *vêtues de leur seule pudeur*—a woefully scanty covering!—navigate these crafts and disport themselves in the water!

In a grassed inclosure, with a little pond in it, in the grounds, were several flamingoes, that had been lately brought from the Desert lakes. Lovely were their roseate-tinted plumage and flame-coloured wings, hideous their ungainly shape and movements, with their small bodies, their writhing, snaky necks, terminating in monstrous heads and beaks; with their glaring yellow eyes, and their long stilts of legs, set into their bodies with no visible thighs. So extraordinary and awkward is the form of their beaks that they cannot pick up their food if scattered on the ground. A pair given to Mrs. R— were brought to the brink of starvation by our ignorance of the fact; so, when we were enlightened, the barley on which they were fed being put into a tub of water, they violently agitated it, and then swallowed down the stirred-up grain and

the water together. The Egyptian flamingo is a large bird, and always white tinted with rose; the wings are scarlet, edged with black. I believe there are no scarlet flamingoes in Egypt. About the Desert lakes, Timseh, Mansoureh, and the smaller ones, flamingoes, pelicans, gray herons, ruddy geese, wild ducks, and innumerable other water-birds, abound. A flight of flamingoes under an Eastern sun must be a gorgeous sight.

From the Grand Kiosk we proceeded to the small one, a nest of sunshine and flowers, radiant, and smiling, and secret; a bower fit for some Eastern Rosamond, too exclusively beloved, too fatally captivating, to be mixed up with the gathering in the hareem, or to be considered safe within the power of a jealous Sultana.

CHAPTER XX.

RETURN TO ALEXANDRIA.

A Race—The Delta—Orange Girls.

At length came the day appointed for our departure from my beloved Dream-City, Masr el Kahira, with all its wonders, its strange characteristics, the singular and contradictory impressions it had conveyed to my mind and feelings during my too brief stay within its walls.

Shall I ever see it again? Probably never. Lost health, the dreary voyage all alone, the thousand nameless bonds that control the free will of the freest, all come between me and it; and I know that this, like most of the things we greatly desire, will remain in the form of a hope, a vague project, the fulfilment of which we do not really expect ever to see, but which is too pleasant to be laid aside among the things we have made up our minds to relinquish.

We started after an early breakfast, but a vast number of Indian passengers being on their way to Alexandria, it was with the utmost difficulty we could all find stowage; and as an indefinite number of Arab porters seized upon our luggage, and rushed wildly about the platform with it, mixing it with the luggage of everybody else, and that a crowd of natives came to offer for sale oranges, fresh sugar-canes, and water, and demanded back-sheesh vociferously, our start was one attended with very serious difficulty.

At last we were off; but not yet, though the train was momentarily quickening its motion, were we out of the reach of the ravening for alms that pervades these degenerate members of the tribes descended from Ishmael. A keen-eyed child, whether girl or boy it was impossible to say, the shapeless bundle of rags that formed its costume marking no distinction of sex, had managed to cross the line, and station itself on the rails at the other side of the train of carriages, and here it went to and fro, begging with frantic energy. When the train started, it started with it; as the train increased its speed, so did the small, lithe, brown creature add to the rapidity of

its movements, shouting out its solicitations as it tore along, its rags fluttering and threatening every moment to release their feeble hold on its straining body.

It was really marvellous the length of time the creature held out, and the speed it achieved. But it was but a small, starved child, and its race against a steam-engine was not likely to be much prolonged, so gradually it dropped behind, and its panting cries of "meskeen, meskeen, backsheesh!" became feebler and feebler, and soon were lost in the distance. What a saïs for a Turk that child would make a few years later! Supposing always it was not of the gentler sex.

Our journey to Cairo having been chiefly performed after dark, we had seen but little of the country, and I was curious to behold the aspect of the teeming Delta. At first the luxuriant richness of the spreading plains, fertilized not only by the annual overflow of the Nile, but abundantly irrigated all the year round by innumerable small channels or *rigoles*, intersecting them in all directions, is, in a manner, satisfying to the eye.

As field after field of waving wheat spread before you, "all the corn in Egypt," is the phrase

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continually recurring to your memory. Far and wide the great green expanse (it was in February when I passed through) stretches its promise of countless wealth of grain. Here and there come patches of other crops—barley, beans, berseem,—and occasionally a blue bloom on the surface of the growth shows where the graceful flax is cultivated; but wheat is everywhere the staple produce.

But ere long the eye and the mind become weary of this rich monotony. For miles it is all the same, until this luxuriant sameness becomes as wearying as aridity.

Around, as far as the eye can reach, spreads a broad green sea; along the road, at either side, runs a little canal, or rather ditch of muddy water, the main line from whence the irrigation is drawn. This ditch, however, is often animated by the presence of waders and other aquatic birds; cranes, bitterns, spur-winged plovers, and little black and white kingfishers, which have a curious fancy for flying along the surface of the water, keeping pace with the train.

Here and there, increasing in frequency as you approach Alexandria, come patches of desert—

sand or reeds;—Arab villages, with a few palms waving over their mud hovels, and silent, desolate, marshy pools; and about some of the stations have grown up plantations of oranges, figs, Palma-christi and other trees. At Kafarzaibat are produced some of the finest oranges I ever saw. We stopped here to lunch, as on our way up we had stopped to dine, and immediately were surrounded by sakas offering water from earthen goullas, vendors of sugar-cane, and girls selling oranges. As we did not get out while the train stopped, but contented ourselves with a lunch of oranges and biscuits, we amused ourselves watching the manoeuvres of these damsels, who were as impudent as the young ladies plying a similar calling in the streets of London, but far more picturesque. They had become such nuisances with their importunities that guards have had to be stationed along the line of the train with long wands to keep them from annoying the passengers, and it is only when summoned by those wishing to buy their oranges that they are suffered to approach the carriages.

The dodges they have, however, to cheat the vigilance of these guards are innumerable. In and

out they slide and glide, offering their wares and yet keeping sight of the guard, waiting till he is within a few feet of them, then darting away from the threatened stroke with shouts and gestures of derision.

One, unable to approach our carriage, stood holding up a great branch newly wrenched from the tree and laden with beautiful fruit, crying out the while to attract our attention, "I say,—ya sit, —I say," and evidently extremely proud of her proficiency in the English tongue.

A little further on we came to the dreary shores of Marcoutis; and then ere long to Alexandria.

CHAPTER XXI.

BAIRAM.

A Levée—Moderation of Arabs—The Princess—The Princess's Reception—"The Mother"—A Gallant Rescue—The Princess's Plaything—Training up a Child in the way it should go—A Tempting Proposal.

NOT long after our return to Alexandria commenced Baidam, the feast that succeeds the fast of Rhamadan. This is the greatest feast in the Mahommedan calendar; and truly to the half-starved population, Turk, Arab, and Nubian, it must be welcome indeed.

On the first day of Bairam (both it and Rhamadan are moveable feasts), the Viceroy and all the chief dignitaries hold levées, friends visit friends with gifts and compliments, everybody dresses in his and her best, and walks about the streets, and eats, drinks, and makes merry, and all your

friends' servants, and your friends' servants' friends, come to demand backsheesh; and your servants and their friends return the compliment, and you cannot prevent them.

It is on this occasion that the solemn courtesy of the East, confined to no rank, to no class, and to no nationality, displays itself with its utmost ceremony.

Standing on the balcony, I looked down, and beheld our *bowwab*, a stately Berber, given to flowing robes and white turbans—learned withal, for he could read, and it was even whispered could write—seated in the sun, holding a levée of ten Arabs, all got up with the most scrupulous attention. They sat, some on chairs or stools, others squatted on the ground, listening apparently with much deference to their entertainer, who, I have little doubt, was, by reason of his accomplishments and the lofty way in which he bore his consciousness thereof, considered a sage of the highest order.

Presently two more Arabs joined the group. Instantly all arose; and then ensued a series of salutes, performed with the profoundest solemnity. Touching of foreheads and breasts, claspings—but

not shakings—of hands, bows, muttered compliments, stage embraces, where each party alternately looked over his friend's shoulder, and these all performed by fellahs and domestic servants belonging to the fellaheen.

And thus it went on all day; every meeting of acquaintances or friends attended with studied displays of politeness.

Fancy Hodge and Dobbin meeting Bob and Bill at Christmas with bows, embraces, and elegantly turned compliments, and all remaining the whole day and night perfectly sober!

I was amused to see three young Arabs, for the very joy of their poor rough-ridden hearts, walking along the street singing and swinging their joined hands in time to the melody. Truly, when we consider the real privations these people uncomplainingly endure through the whole month of Rhamadan, it is matter of great surprise that they comport themselves with such moderation, when the privilege to eat their daily meals and sleep their nightly sleep is once more accorded them; and that freedom to feast (when their scanty means afford it), after an amount of abstinence from food and rest that often affects their health,

and that would take all the stamina out of Bob and Bill (Hodge and Dobbin, accustomed too often to underfeeding, might bear it better), does not lead to excess. That it does not do so, except it may be in very rare instances, is certain. I have heard of drunken Arabs, but they have always shared the peculiarity of ghosts, for I never saw one, and nobody could positively recall having himself seen one, so far as I could make out.

The same may, though in a less degree, be said of the Turks of the lower class. But among the upper, especially those who have received the benefit of a European education and been instructed in the blessings and refinements of civilized life, drunkenness is very common.

A friend of mine said one day, speaking of a certain high dignitary, carefully educated in Paris, "I wish I could ask — Pacha to dinner; he is very amusing and original, but I know he would get so drunk."

The Viceroy has but one wife, and she is called among Europeans the Princess; I know not what her proper title may be.

During the four days of Bairam, the Princess receives lady visitors, and the hareem is crowded,

especially on the first day, with women of all nations, chiefly, however, Eastern.

The wives of foreign diplomatists, of Consuls-general, Consuls, &c., of the various public functionaries, of the chief bankers and merchants, and strangers who can obtain an introduction through some lady known to the Princess, come to offer to her Highness the compliments of the season. Some of the ladies of the viceregal family, also, come in person, others send letters of congratulation: the latter mode is more used when the Princess passes Bairam at Alexandria than at Cairo, Turkish ladies of Masr having much more liberty of going out than those of Iskanderieh. In the former city it is common enough to see hareem carriages, known by the mules which always are employed to draw them, and by their closed blinds—though the closing is not always so complete as to preclude peeps of yashmaks with glinting eyes above them being now and then obtained—but in the latter town they are hardly ever seen.

This year, fortunately for me, the Princess passed Bairam at Alexandria, and Mrs. R— being known to and a favourite with her, I was secure of an introduction.

With the recollection of our visit to the hareem of Selim Pacha fresh in our minds, however, we wished to go in company with some lady better versed in the Eastern tongues and the Eastern customs than ourselves; so we made arrangements to accompany Madame R—, the wife of the Dutch Consul-General, who was perfectly *au fait* of all such matters, and whose courteous kindness on this and on many other occasions I am happy here to acknowledge. The Viceregal hareem at Alexandria is in a house, as usual within a high-walled garden, on the banks of the canal.

A long line of carriages was ranged under the wall as we drove up, and it was not easy to gain the door of ingress.

At last, however, we reached and crossed the threshold, and were ushered by one of the many slaves in attendance through the yard and into the vestibule. Here were more slaves, and some of the ladies of the hareem, and visitors were received by one who now holds only a second place to the Princess, but who may, one day, reign paramount to her and to all.

This is the mother of Said Pacha's only child, a fine handsome boy of ten or eleven, but last year

removed from the tutelage of the hareem, and placed under the care of a "Governor," in a house and with an establishment of his own.

I may here make a little digression with an anecdote of this child's mere baby days.

He had an English nurse, who doted on him, and who was allowed to take liberties in the household utterly unknown to the native domestics. When Toussoon Pacha was about four years old, the Viceroy insisted on the child's appearing on his pony beside him at a grand review. The nurse remonstrated; the father held out—the son was proud and pleased at the dignity of his position.

But when the "cannons began for to roar," Toussoon began for to roar in chorus. Said Pacha, determined not to give in to an unbelieving doggess, acted the stern parent, and refused to allow the terrified child to be removed.

Presently, however, arose behind a struggle, a scuffle, a woman's cries, soldiers' voices, and through the thick of the assembled troops burst nurse; straight she made for the brilliant group of the viceregal staff, in among the horses' legs, till she reached her darling, and despite of the Pacha's threats and prohibitions, boldly did she

lift the poor child from his miniature charger and bear him back, safe folded in her arms, to the carriage from which his screams had drawn her.

To return to our reception.

The om (pronounced oom), or mother, is a woman, still, I am told, quite young, but looking, as all Oriental women do, much beyond her age. Her face, without being handsome, is very pleasing, more gentle and intelligent in its expression than that of any Eastern woman I have seen. She was handsomely dressed enough, but with little pretension, far less brilliantly than many of the slaves, and her head was decorated with natural flowers and few, if any, jewels. She received us with much grace and sweetness, rising from her seat and accompanying us part of the way towards the apartments of the Princess.

Passing through an antechamber we found ourselves in the presence of the great lady.

The room was very large and especially long, with a row of windows looking on the garden. There was no furniture but divans ranged round the walls, a few chairs, and a gaudy, large-patterned Brussels carpet, very bright and very vulgar.

Near the door, on a divan higher than the rest, and hung with rich silk and gold stuffs, reclined the Princess, smoking a chibouque, while a vast number of ladies sat round on divans or chairs, totally silent, or murmuring to each other in subdued voices.

We bowed over the hand the Princess presented to us,—the Eastern ladies who came and went dropped on one knee as they bent their foreheads on it and kissed it,—and took the chairs placed for us beside the grand divan; and while Madame R— and Mrs. R— exchanged compliments with her Highness, I, after being introduced in due form, sat still and examined her and her surroundings.

The Princess is taller than almost any Eastern woman I have seen, and has an unusually slight figure for the inhabitant of a hareem. She is called handsome, but I could see no beauty in the cold, sallow, weary face, where sat a mingled expression of scorn and *ennui*. She had salient cheek bones, with hollows beneath them, a somewhat wide, thin-lipped, discontented mouth, a particularly angular jaw, large, heavy-lidded, sleepy eyes, and thick, dark eyebrows meeting in the

middle. The whole of her dress was composed of rich French silk, white, with large violet *pensées* strewed over it, and on her head-dress were some fine diamond ornaments.

After speaking a few words, she sat still and smoked in silence, with half-closed eyes; and as, during the whole of our stay (we could not, in civility remain less than an hour), the chibouque, or the cigarette with which she varied it—held in a porte-cigar enriched with emeralds—never was out of her mouth, I concluded that she always smoked, and was habitually in a state of semi-stupefaction in consequence.

The usual coffee and chibouques, with the addition of rahatlicoum, were brought to us, and then we, like the rest, fell into a state of silence and contemplation.

Presently arrived a break to our meditations in the shape of a little girl of about seven or eight years old, who walked into the room with an air of easy, not to say impudent confidence.

This was the plaything of the childless wife, who daily saw before her the envied mother of her husband's only son. Training and custom will do much towards reconciling us to things hard to

bear; but human nature cannot be utterly silenced and set aside, and I could not help thinking that the worn face might have assumed an aspect less world-weary had it been the face of a mother.

The new-comer's dress was such a delightfully incongruous mixture of European and Oriental costume that we could not but smile on beholding it. She wore a pink satin tunic trimmed with black velvet, made as Turkish children's tunics are, narrow in the skirt and folded across the bosom; but beneath, with no intermediate petticoat was a *cage*! the tight skirt strained over it, and every hoop distinctly marked! Her trousers, not full but made like an Englishman's trousers, were also of pink satin, and so was the skull-cap she wore on her head. But on her breast and on her head blazed two gorgeous diamond butterflies, larger than the largest swallow-tails, and of infinite brilliancy.

This girl, a child of low origin, had been adopted by the Princess; a custom much in vogue with the many childless women of the hareems, who are always, I am told, very kind—in their way—to these adopted slaves, bringing them up as they would children of their own, and marrying

them generally to young men of the condition of the protectress, who consider such a marriage as no *mésalliance*, particularly where the latter is a great lady and the *protégée* well-dowered.

A faint smile passed over the sallow face of the Princess as the child entered, and she called it to her. The girl obeyed, and stood by the divan, gazing at us with a sort of air that had in it more of defiance than of any gentler feeling.

Not a winning child, I should say, with her pale face, dark hair, and bold black eyes, that seemed determined to stare ours down.

Presently the creature began to play about and to talk. And here again I found that ignorance was bliss. Madame R— making some remark to the Princess, the child took up the word, and said something which caused the Princess to burst out into an amused laugh, but which covered poor Madame R— with confusion. It seems that this bantling is instructed in the style of jokes and conversation in which the Pasha delights, and nothing is too gross for the ladies of the hareem to teach her.

While we were there arrived several messengers with letters of congratulation to the

Princess from different members of the viceregal family. She gave these her hand to kiss with an air of lofty indifference, taking no notice of their salutations on bended knee; then languidly tore open the missives, glanced over their contents (which very probably she could not read), and threw them carelessly aside. How far all this listless scorn was real, and how far assumed, to impress the spectators with a due sense of her grandeur, it is hard to say.

After some more silent smoking, she addressed herself to Mrs. R—, on the subject of the latter's skill in horsemanship, a skill which had greatly amazed Alexandria, where a woman on horseback is a rare sight. "I should like to ride," she said, languidly; "I intend to ride in the garden (!)—I wish you would come and ride with me." Mrs. R—, of course, was at her Highness's disposal, and of course, also, the matter ended there: but I would have given a good deal to see the lounging, nerveless, Eastern woman, who I do not suppose ever walked a quarter of a mile in her life, mounted *en Amazone*, with the strong, active, young Englishwoman, always among the first in at the death, in the stiffest hunting counties in

England, pacing up and down the straight walks of a garden, by way of "taking a ride!"

At last came the happy moment of our liberation. We made our adieux to the Princess, and to the sweet-faced "mother," who had entered the room a few minutes before—the one receiving them quite *en princesse*, the other with a simple, kindly grace*—and passed out again to the courtyard, where slaves presented us with glass bowls of some thick, sweet, sickly stuff, of the consistence of gruel. Of course we had to taste, but tasting—happily—was sufficient; and once more I passed out of the hareem into the free world beyond, with joy and thankfulness that the lines had not fallen to me in such very unpleasant places. At some of these receptions there are dancers and singers; and the famous Sachné, the Malibran, Grisi, and Lind of Egypt rolled into one, is occasionally called in to perform on such occasions. I wished very much to hear her, but could not find an opportunity. I misdoubted the

* It must be always borne in mind that, according to Turkish customs and manners, no shadow of disgrace or shame attached itself to the position of this woman, nor was the legitimacy of her son in any way affected by his not being born in wedlock.

effect of Eastern singing on our ears, but even Europeans have told me Sachné's singing was well worth hearing. She receives fabulous sums of money and gifts for her performances; and the Viceroy, on one occasion, presented her with a small palace.

CHAPTER XXII.

VALE!

Christian Chapel—Ruins—Arrival of the Prince of Wales—
The Prince and the Pacha—The Prince's Demeanour—
Preparations for Departure—Malta—Maltese Eyes—
Through the South—Journeying—A Wrench.

AMONG the many interesting ruins to be seen about Alexandria, not the least so is an ancient Christian chapel, long buried among its catacombs, but recent discovered. It is simply excavated, like the tombs beneath and around it, in the bowels of the hill; the object of such places of worship being concealment for the persons and rites of the worshippers of Christ, in times of persecution. It is very small, and has no attempt at any internal architecture—a mere vaulted cave, with graves beneath, and an inner recess, where tombs are ranged in double tiers at either side,

like berths in a ship. But the walls are decorated with coarse frescoes of Christian emblems and of saints, singly or in groups, considerably defaced—in most instances the heads, with the encircling nimbus, have been wilfully obliterated by “the faithful;”—but here and there the figures are sufficiently distinct, and the draperies are not without merit. At present the place is kept by Arab guardians, who spread their wretched beds on the floor, and eat, drink, sleep, and receive the gratuities of visitors there in perfect comfort and contentment. All the tombs—which were open—were empty; the remains of the “bodies of saints who slept therein” being doubtless considered by the present dwellers in the place, as abominations and defilements, to be removed from their neighbourhood with all possible despatch.

Most of the hill in front of the chapel has now been dug away; but it is evident from its situation that it must formerly have been reached by a subterranean passage, only known, probably, to the few who assembled there for the purposes of worship and concealment.

The part of the hill that yet remains, is pierced

in various places with tombs, and deep, mysterious, narrow caverns, some of which have black, silent water at the bottom, as you may hear by throwing in a stone. Others, high up, are, of course, dry, and very likely served as places of refuge, till the "tyranny was overpast."

Nearly all the ground about Alexandria is literally honeycombed with relics and foundations of ancient buildings, belonging to various epochs, dynasties, and religions, and intended for as various uses. Discoveries of these are not unfrequently made by the sudden evanishment of vehicles proceeding leisurely along the public roads, and excavations of any extent are almost sure to bring ruins to light. Water-works, for the supply of the city, having, some few years ago been established, it was found in digging the foundations, that it was necessary, at great labour and expense, to cut through a series of vaults of immense solidity. This was done, when lo! these vaults were found to be merely superposed on others of equal density, which had also to be destroyed. There could have been no "sudden falls of houses" recorded in the news organs, whatever they may have been, of those barbarous days,

destroying human life and property through the ignorance, the carelessness, or the fraud of incapable or dishonest architects, as in our enlightened ones. *Mais nous avons changé tout cela* — the houses, we hope, mayn't tumble down about *our* heads, and *après nous le déluge*.

Shortly before I left Egypt, the Prince of Wales' visit to the East took place. We went to see him land, and as the station for the Indian passengers is close to the landing, and as the Prince, for whom a special train of the Pacha's carriages was in attendance, proceeded from thence direct to Cairo, we had a good opportunity of seeing him, and noting his reception. As he was travelling semi-incognito, and in deep mourning, this was quiet enough ; but his simplicity of dress and manner, and his easy, gentlemanlike bearing, so perfectly different to the *fanfaronnade* of the little great men among whom he was come, seemed rather to puzzle the Easterns. Was it that, after all, the heir to the throne of England was no such grand personage—or could it be that he was so *very* grand that he did not think the occasion worth any display of grandeur?—was the question.

Turkish *ruse* was called into play on the Prince's arrival at Cairo, in order to settle to the satisfaction of the Pacha's *amour-propre* a question that had been mooted, as to which was to pay the first visit, the Prince or the Pacha.

With whom lay the fault I cannot pretend to say, but on the Prince's arrival at Cairo, it was suddenly discovered that no lodging of any sort or kind had been provided for his reception, or, at all events, no one about him knew of any such provision having been made. The consequence was that a message had to be sent off to the Pacha to announce his arrival, and to inquire where he and his suite were to "put up," the Prince, in the meanwhile, waiting for the answer at the railway station.

This, of course, was what the wily Turk had been working for. So back came the messenger, with a due band of carriages and attendants, to express the Pacha's deep regret at such a *contre-temps*, and to offer a most earnest invitation that his Royal Highness would accept the poor hospitality of the Viceroy's own palace, during the brief time necessary for completing the arrangements already in progress for his reception at

that destined for the inestimable honour of sheltering him, during the time he might bless the city of Masr with his glorious, illustrious, replendent, and never-to-be-sufficiently-worshipped presence.

The Prince, nothing doubting, simply complied with the request; and the Pacha quickly made all his dominions, to say nothing of head-quarters at Constantinople, aware of the fact that due homage had been offered to his person and position by the heir to the English Crown paying the first visit! *C'est comme ça qu'on écrit l'histoire.*

Before the Prince's arrival, we made the acquaintance of Dr. Stanley, who brought letters from some of Mrs. R—'s friends in England; and Mr. R—, being well acquainted with all the ground the Prince proposed to go over during his stay in the East, and having made a variety of interesting notes on the spot at some of the most remarkable sites, was able to afford him some practical and valuable information.

Captain Bower, commanding the Prince's yacht, we also became acquainted with, on his return to Alexandria, at the conclusion of the expedition,

and from him we learnt many amusing, and in all cases, favourable traits of the young Royal traveller. But sorely puzzled, and in many cases scandalized, were Turkish grandees and Turkish functionaries, by the Prince's small regard for their forms of etiquette.

The eldest born of royalty, himself the successor to that royalty, liked better to comport himself as a simple gentleman than to be surrounded day and night with ceremonies, speeches, and salaams; than to have his free will suspended and his free limbs fettered by an unceasing regard to the enslaving *convenances* of Oriental decorum! Well, the English are all "originals;" we have only to cross the Channel to know that our eccentricity passeth the eccentricity, not to say the comprehension, of all other nations in the aggregate; so it is not to be expected that the rulers of the land shall do otherwise than keep up our reputation, and set us an example in that respect.

At last came the day, the 11th April, fixed for my return to England, in company with my dear and kind hostess, whose health required the bracing of native air. Her husband, retained at

his post by important business, was to follow some weeks later.

The weather and the climate, since February, had been advancing from spring to summer; the air was laden with the perfume of lemon and orange blossom, the mulberry and fig-trees had covered themselves with soft, bright green foliage, and the bananas were unrolling their long wands into great spreading leaves. Balmy and delicious as June were the sunny days and the soft nights, with their sapphire skies, large silver moons, and glittering stars—I noted especially the great green luminous star of my Mediterranean experience;—and the thought that less than a week's journey would change all this for chilly, peevish, capricious days, and nights of late frosts, was not cheering.

However, as Mrs. R— had already deferred her journey entirely out of consideration for me, I could not think of further delay; and we were, on the day appointed, conveyed on board the “P. and O.” steamer, “Valetta,” in the boat of the “Osborne,” escorted by Captain Bower, and one or two of our most intimate Alexandrian friends.

We arrived early on the fourth day at Malta,

landed, and went to visit the church of St. John, the governor's palace, with its noble hall, decorated with relics and suits of armour of the knights of old, and various other sights of interest.

The view from the upper part of the town is, I think, almost the finest I ever saw. A terrace of prodigious height, with open arches and niches wherein you can sit, looks down on the town and on the harbours, lying bathed in sunshine and blue, blue water; and wherever you go, this sunshine reflected from the creamy stone with which all the houses are built, and peeps of this blue water, appearing suddenly at the end of nearly every break-neck street—some are so steep that they become flights of stairs—greet you joyously. Then all the gardens, and all the squares, and all the cool, silent, inner courts of the great, noble old houses are full of orange and lemon trees, the scent of which, at this time of year, pervades the whole island, and jasmin, and roses, and great tall geraniums climbing up the walls, and myrtles, and loquats, and I know not what fruits and flowers beside.

About the church doors chiefly might be seen

the Maltese women, many young and very picturesque-looking, with their astounding eyes, laughing out from the coquettish, half-concealment of the *faldette*, a wondrous mantle of black silk, with a great hood supported by arches of cane.

Talk of Turkish eyes, Arab eyes, Egyptian eyes! I saw finer ones—far and away—in my first half-hour at Malta, than during all my stay in Egypt. And these eyes, moreover, owed nothing to art; but their long, thick, curved lashes had ten times the effect of all the khol with which Eastern beauties (?) seek, and in a certain degree succeed, to invest their orbs with a brilliancy of which nature has not been particularly lavish.

We got on board the “Valetta” to dinner; and from Malta to Marseilles kept, with little intermission, in sight of land, chiefly small, rocky islets. Of all, one attracted the attention of every passenger. Caprera, the barren rock, with its single little whitewashed dwelling—the abode of the greatest man and purest, truest hero of modern days, Garibaldi—was slowly passed, and every glass in the ship was in eager requisition to look at the dark, frowning spot on the blue waters, with the gleaming white speck on its sombre face.

We landed at Marseilles early in the morning, were long detained at the Custom-house, ate a very bad, ill-served, scrambling breakfast at the *table-d'hôte* of an hotel to which we had been recommended, and were off by rail ere midday.

The bloom and beauty about Marseilles at this time of the year, and the charm of the scenery, for many leagues through the genial south, were wonderful.

Here a valley, with the waters of the Rhone flowing through it, bounded one side of the road, while abruptly from the other rose steep conical hills, every niche and lap and hollow in their rocky sides bristling with the supports of the young vines, from whose fruit are pressed the luscious wines found at only the tables of the richest and most refined connoisseurs.

Then these hills would recede and give to view far, far away, peaks of pearly, iridescent tints, melting tenderly into the soft, pale sky.

And so on, till night shut out the prospect ; and on a chilly, foggy, damp morning, we found ourselves once more in Paris.

Here we stayed a few days, having friends and sights to see, and purchases to make in the dear

old town, which for many years of my life, in days gone by, had been my home. The plunge from Egypt into *plein Paris* was curious enough. I think the *hurry* of the life, was what chiefly struck me. Everybody seemed in such a fuss, everybody appeared to have so much to do and to see—the day was so filled, from early morning to late at night, with work and play, and perpetual going to and fro—that I seemed to be rushing through the time, and never able to rush fast enough.

Over the well-known road to Boulogne, a roughish passage in a horribly crowded steamer, where seats were hardly procurable, and up to London. Here, after a stoppage and a struggle of much more than an hour, on a cold, dreary night, to get our baggage through the Customs, Mrs. R. and I, who for so many months had lived beneath the same roof—shared the same interests, pleasures, and occupations, enjoyed the society of the same friends,—parted with a mutual Godspeed, she on her way, I on mine, for the first time for all those months, alone. The sight of dear familiar friendly faces, the glad welcome of cordial voices, quickly changed the aspect of things; but the sudden parting, and break-up of happy companionship,

the first lonely night drive, launched out in solitude on the great world of London, through the wilderness of cold, plashy streets, made this not the happiest moment of my travels.

THE END.

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